

DEMO DVD! 9 MASSIVE PLAYABLE DEMOS!



FIRST DETAILS INSIDE!

GRAND THEFT AUTO SAN ANDREAS

**GET SET FOR THE
WORLD'S MOST
NOTORIOUS
CRIME SPREE!**



**OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN
XBOX MAGAZINE**

EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON REPORT!

GRAN TURISMO: WHO NEEDS IT?

**FORZA MOTORSPORTS IS THE
RACING SIM OF THE FUTURE!**



**Go ahead,
mech my day!**

**First Australian Review of
Mechassault 2: Lone Wolf!**

Oi! Are you blind, Ref?

**How sports games of the future
will break all the rules!**

EXCLUSIVE! SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

**CHECK OUT SAM FISHER'S AWESOME
NEW WEAPONS AND MOVES!**

9 EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMOS!

- FORZA MOTORSPORT
- STAR WARS REPUBLIC
COMMANDO
- OUTLAW GOLF 2
- WORMS FORTS
AND LOADS MORE!

No disc? Ask your newsagent!

HEADLINE NEWS: SUPER MONKEY BALL, 32-PLAYER DEATHMATCHES, PLAYBOY UPDATE, THE NEW MEDAL OF HONOR...



**SWEATY FIGHTERS!
WRESTLEMANIA 21**



**BLOCKY JEDI!
LEGO STAR WARS**



**SURVIVE THIS!
COLD FEAR**

DERWENT & HOWARD



9 771446 425009

ISSUE 37 FEBRUARY 2005 \$14.95 NZ \$16.95 INC GST
PRINT POST APPROVED PP235003/06048



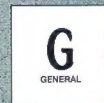
Audio Shop



Performance Shop



Visual Upgrades



© 2004 Electronic Arts Inc. Electronic Arts, Need for Speed, EA GAMES and the EA GAMES logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. EA GAMES™ is an Electronic Arts™ brand. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. INTERNET CONNECTIVITY required. Online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor (sold separately). Microsoft, Xbox and the Xbox Logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or in other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. Nintendo Game Boy™, and Game Boy Advance™, Gamecube are trademarks of Nintendo Co., Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



8-8

Discover the living, breathing world of tuner culture in Need for Speed™ Underground 2, the sequel to the bestselling racing game of 2003, and the latest blockbuster installment in the legendary Need for Speed™ franchise.



PlayStation®2



OUT NOW!

X MARKS



\$84⁴⁸

Brothers In Arms: Road to Hill 3.0 Xbox™ (MA15+). 1128586



PRE-ORDER
@
**HARVEY
NORMAN**
IN-STORE
END
FEBRUARY
2005



Limited Edition
Tin Box available



PRE-ORDER
@
**HARVEY
NORMAN**
IN-STORE
END
MARCH
2005

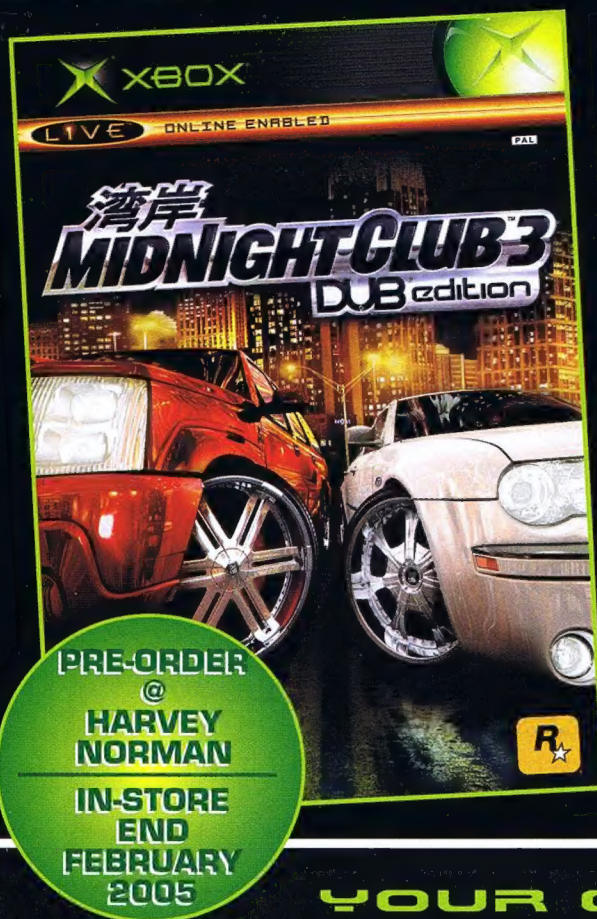
\$84⁴⁸

Doom 3 Xbox™ (MA15+). XBDOOM3C

Harvey Norman

Harvey Norman stores are operated by independent franchisees.

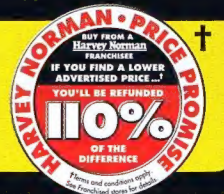
THE SPOT



YOUR GAMES DESTINATION

we **won't be beaten** on price! >>

† Terms and conditions apply. See Franchised stores for details.



The welcome mat:



History repeats

DEDICATED READERS probably won't be surprised by the announcement that *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* is coming to Xbox, nor should they be. Given the eventual release of the *GTA Double Pack* on Xbox, any suggestion that the gaming world's biggest money spinner would be exclusive to any one system is frankly absurd.

And here we are, with the announcement that not only is *San Andreas* coming to Xbox, it's coming to Xbox in half the time it took *Vice City*.

There is an endless number of observations that can be made - Rockstar is striking while the iron is hot; they've recognised that the market for Xbox is booming; and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see how gamers of every persuasion are making the great migration from what's essentially now a DVD case-sized toy to the next-generation joys of Xbox.

Which brings me to the centrepiece of this issue: *Forza Motorsport*. It's being touted as Microsoft's answer to *Gran Turismo 4*. Now, without making any direct references to other games, I'm happy to confirm that *Forza Motorsport* does not suffer from any of the following problems: invisible track barriers, zero damage modelling and driver AI that'll smash into you just to maintain the best racing line. Oh, and online play wasn't cancelled either.

Like *V8 Supercars 2*, *Forza Motorsport* is going to provide the realism being demanded by racing fans, a level of modification and detailing that'll put *NFS Underground* to shame, and a long line-up of desirable vehicles that spares us the pointless family wagons. It sounds like a jack of all trades - only time will tell whether it's a master of any of them.

Before I go, I'd like everyone to spare a thought for the victims of the Asian tsunami tragedy. As of this writing, over 150,000 people are dead and millions more have had their lives destroyed. Who knows what fall-out will follow. Donate, volunteer, pray, do what you can to help - it's the least we can do after one of the worst natural disasters in recorded history.

Happy gaming!

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR, OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN
XBOX MAGAZINE

WIN A STREET FIGHTER PACK!

THANKS TO THQ, we've got five copies of *Street Fighter Anniversary Collection* to give away, which comes bundled with the classic *Street Fighter Animated*

Movie. To enter, go to the OXM section of www.derwenthoward.com.au and fill in your details. The closing date for the comp is February 22, 2005.



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN
XBOX MAGAZINE

OFFICIAL

THE BEST XBOX NEWS AND REVIEWS

PLAYABLE

THE EXCLUSIVE SOURCE FOR PLAYABLE XBOX DEMOS

FIRST

NEWS, PREVIEWS & REVIEWS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

THE OFFICIAL *Australian Xbox Magazine* is written by a group of experienced gamers who've spent their lives playing games. We believe that games are the most exciting form of entertainment there is. This magazine will reflect that at all times.

WE BELIEVE THAT the arrival of Xbox represents one of the most important developments in video games. Xbox will not 'kill' the PS2 or GameCube - and as gamers we wouldn't want it to. However, the power and technological innovation offered by Microsoft's new machine will result in better games and more choice for Xbox owners.

BEING THE OFFICIAL *Australian Xbox Magazine* means that we are in the best position to give impartial, honest review scores. We don't do any deals to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best possible position to give you what you deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which to base your buying decisions.

MICROSOFT HAS no access to, or influence over, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. The company's involvement ends once it has made available to us materials we need for the magazine, and it will only read our reviews when you do.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE we are the official magazine, we have unprecedented access to the newest Xbox games in development and the people making them. Our coverage of forthcoming titles will take you closer than ever before to the most exciting new games. We will talk to the developers and publish the best new screenshots before anyone else.

OUR OFFICIAL STATUS allows us to get closer to every Xbox story, rooting out the truth from the rumours and speculation. Because we can go directly to the people involved, you can be assured that every story in the magazine will be accurate and truthful.

THE OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE is part of a huge network of games journalists across the globe, ready to visit games developers wherever they are and report exclusively for the *Official Xbox Magazine* World Network.

WE BELIEVE that the readers of the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* are one of our most important assets. While it's our job to provide you with the demos, news, previews and reviews you need, we want to be a place where your opinions and expertise can be shared with the new Xbox community.

THE NIGHTMARE GOES LIVE!



JOIN FORCES AGAINST THE HORRORS OF HELL

PULSE POUNDING ACTION AND REVOLUTIONARY TECHNOLOGY
COMBINE TO DRAW YOU INTO THE MOST FRIGHTENING AND
VISUALLY STUNNING GAME EVER CREATED. FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE
IN SINGLE PLAYER, ONLINE MULTIPLAYER, OR THE XBOX® LIVE™
EXCLUSIVE CO-OP MODE.

DOOM³

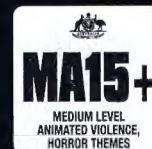
COMING
MARCH 2005



XBOX
LIVE
ONLINE ENABLED

Distributed By
ACTIVISION

Xbox Development
**Vicarious
Visions**



WWW.DOOM3.COM



LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION

INCLUDES:

- DOOM 3 XBOX
- FULL VERSIONS OF THE ORIGINAL
ULTIMATE DOOM AND DOOM II. WITH
SINGLEPLAYER OR DEATHMATCH AND
CO-OP IN 2-4 PLAYER SPLIT-SCREEN MODES.
- G4: VIDEO GAME TV "ICONS" FEATURE:
"BEHIND THE SCENES OF DOOM 3"
- INTERVIEWS WITH THE ID
SOFTWARE TEAM
- CONCEPT ART: STORYBOARD
AND SKETCH GALLERY

©2005 Id Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Distributed by Activision Publishing, Inc. under license. DOOM and ID are registered trademarks of Id Software, Inc. in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and/or some other countries. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox Live, the Live Logos and the Xbox Logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks and trade name are the properties of their respective owners.

On the Disc...



WELCOME TO Issue 37's Playable Game Disc, the only source available for playable demos, movies, downloads and more for your Xbox.

This month's disc comes jam-packed with nine of the hottest games on the market, starting with the racing game that's got every Xbox owner talking, Forza Motorsport. Yes, it's getting a lot of hype; and yes, it's being touted as a Gran Turismo killer; and yes, that in itself seems a bit far fetched. However, read up on our feature at page 052, play the demo on our disc and you'll have a pretty good idea of how things will pan out. We're excited by the mere fact that it'll have damage modelling!

Outlaw Golf 2 and Worms Forts: Under Siege provides this month's round of comedy action. Whether you're beating the bejesus out of your caddy or hurling an exploding fridge at your opposing team, you're guaranteed hours of entertainment with these games.

Fancy yourself a Star Wars fan? Well, if you're like our editor and in desperate need of something to chomp on before Episode 3 comes out, play a few rounds of Republic Commando.

With five other classic demos, game-saves and demo movies, this is a disc we hope you'll enjoy for ages. Enjoy, and we'll see you next issue!

Forza Motorsport

Reviewed: Coming soon Score: TBA
Players: 1

THINK OF THE world's best car and what springs to mind? A modded Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution? Or maybe a Ferrari F50? Whatever your preference, it's probably in *Forza Motorsport*. This game is a car enthusiast's dream come true, featuring more than 200 of the sexiest custom-built motors ever.

This demo presents a superb selection of 12 cars from three different classes. In the B-class race, you can drive the Nissan 350Z, Subaru Impreza WRX STi, Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution VIII GSR and the Acura NSX. The A-Class touring cars include the Chevrolet Corvette C6, Ferrari 360 Modena F1, Porsche 911 GT3 and the Dodge Viper GTS ACR.

Stepping up to the most challenging automobile category, the R-Class of cars include Audi #1 Infineon R8, Toyota #27 GT-ONE TS020, BMW #15 V12 LMR, and the Ferrari #12 Risi Competizione F333SP. These GT-grade vehicles are seriously fast and incredibly hard to drive, especially on the tight twists and turns of the classic Laguna Seca raceway.

Fortunately, you can adjust the difficulty by turning on features like Stability Management, Traction Control and Anti-lock Braking. Try playing without them and you'll start to realise just how deep this awesome racing simulation goes.

Once you've chosen a car and gone through the automatic tune-up, you'll be put through a three-lap race. Three opponents will be randomly selected from other cars in the same class.



Outlaw Golf 2

Reviewed: Page 078 Score: 7.0
Players: 1-4

THERE ARE TWO very different kinds of way to play golf. One is to prance about in chequered clown trousers, or to spit, swear, fight and flatten spectators with your golf kart.

Outlaw Golf 2 follows the rough and rowdy course of action. In this trial version you can play as the hip-hop combo Ice Trey and Fresh Fruit, or Harley and her burly biker buddy Snake. It's a three-hole game on the creepy Spooky Hollow course in Salem, Massachusetts.

All you have to do is hole the ball using as few shots as possible. Choose a shot type with the D-pad and set the trajectory using the B button.

How well your golfer performs depends on how 'in the zone' you are. You can improve your status by executing good shots or by playing a mini-game. As long as you have a token, you can press Y to select the Beating or Golf Kart Racing mini-game.

In Beating mode, the object is to hit the A button at the exact moment the fist icon crosses your caddy's face. Golf Kart racing asks you to run over seven spectators and jump through a hoop in just 25 seconds! It's possible to earn additional tokens by beating the par for each hole.

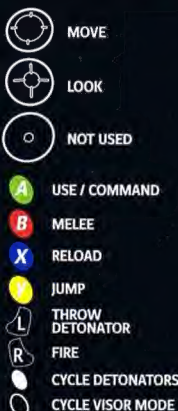


Star Wars: Republic Commando

Reviewed: Coming soon Score: TBA
Players: 1

HAVING A LIGHTSABER held to your throat is a pretty good incentive to try anything. Fortunately, the trial version of *Star Wars: Republic Commando* on this month's disc is so cool that you won't need any such kind of 'persuasion'.

You take on the role of Delta Lead, a clone trooper fighting for the Republic. In this mission entitled Waking the Giant, Delta Squad has infiltrated a Trade Federation Capital Ship. With the droid force fully alerted you must rendezvous with the rest of Delta Squad and blast a path through to the bridge.



If you're a little confused about the HUD, think *Halo 2* meets *Metroid Prime*. The rectangular borders represent the frame of your helmet. These can be switched off via the HUD options menu. Your shield bar on the bottom left will replenish after a short time. Damage to your health will only occur if you take hits when the shield is fully depleted.

You can command Delta Squad to perform actions like breaching doors and setting up sniper positions. Simply point your crosshair over key areas until a context-sensitive icon appears in blue, then press A to issue the command.

During the mission, you'll also have to destroy one of the robot generators that drops down from the roof. Plant a charge on it to blow it away. Otherwise, it'll keep spewing out enemies.



↑ The Xbox controller is your gateway to the Official Australian Xbox Magazine Game Disc. Use the directional pad or left thumbstick to highlight the menus in the right-hand window and press the A button to select. The B button returns you to the previous menu and the White button zooms in for an extreme close-up of the screen.



Worms Forts: Under Siege

Reviewed: Issue 35
Score: 8.4
Players: 1-2

THIS DEMO covers two mighty conflicts set in Egypt and Ancient Greece.

If you haven't played a *Worms* game before, the object is to wipe out the entire opposing force of wiggly warriors. Players take it in turns to build fortifications and take shots at the other side. Each turn lasts 60 seconds and firing a shot always makes the turn end instantly. Therefore, it's a good idea to start building new castles before you go on the offensive.



There are two reasons to build castles. Firstly, you'll have better protection. More importantly, you'll be able to build siege weapons on top of them. As you build bigger and better castles, a more destructive range of siege weapons will become available.

We recommend the Rhino launcher if you want to wreak absolute devastation.

To build a siege weapon, go to one of the gold stars on the map and press the B button to bring up the weapon panel.

You don't have to build a siege weapon to attack, though. Bazookas and grenades don't need towers, but they have a lower firing accuracy.

- MOVE WORM
- MOVE CAMERA (CLICK) RESET CAMERA
- AIM/ROTATE
- FIRE
- WEAPON PANEL
- JUMP
- CANCEL
- BLIMP VIEW
- FIRST PERSON
- FUSE / GIRDER UP
- FUSE / GIRDER DOWN

Bonus Demos

AS AN EXTRA TREAT this month, we've included the best bonus demos from recent issues of *OXM*. We'd hate for you to have missed any of these incredible trial versions. If you're new to the mag, welcome, these are for you.

Prince of Persia: Warrior Within

Complete two swashbuckling missions, including a very helpful combat tutorial. There are also two tough-as-nails bosses for you to beat.

Conflict: Vietnam

This is one jungle you can't wait to get out of. It's up to you to lead a battle-weary squad of Marines through Vietcong-controlled territory.

The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay

He's the meanest escapologist in the galaxy, but even Butcher Bay is a challenge for Riddick. Cut through swathes of vicious prison guards.

Sudeki

Visually stunning, this action adventure didn't really get the reception it deserved on launch. Give it a try and see what you're missing.

Dead or Alive Ultimate

Still not out for months yet, but you can play it now! This beautiful brawler is a must-try for fight fans. You can play as four different characters in Tag Team or Individual battles.



Game Saves

NO BOSS TOO tough, no mission too impossible. Play: More is determined to crack open every Xbox title and bring you the hottest downloadable game saves. This month, we've got excellent saves for the following four games...

Deus Ex: Invisible War

Four saves from across this classic game. From Antarctica through Germany, Egypt, and Washington, the whole thing has been blasted open.

Tenchu: Return From Darkness

Extra character Tesshu is unlocked and every mission is open for you to murderise. Get out there and show them who's boss!

Terminator 3: Redemption

Totally hacked - even Skynet couldn't withstand all cheats, all levels, all movies, and all concept art being blown apart.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005

Want \$18 million, all the best clubs, stats at 110 per cent and Pro Shop items coming out of your ears? Then it's your lucky day! Look what we've got for you...

How To...

Download your Game Saves

SAVES CAN BE found in the Game Saves and Extra Content menus. Highlight one and press the A button to download it. If the save is greyed out and can't be selected, you already have a save of this type on your Xbox hard disk. Simply go into the memory screen on your Xbox Dashboard, delete the save and, the next time you load the game disc, the option will reappear in white.

PROBLEMS WITH YOUR DISC?

If your Official Australian Xbox Magazine demo DVD is faulty, send it back to us at *Disc Returns, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction NSW 1555*, and we'll replace the disc without delay. Don't forget to include your postal address so we can send it back to you!



064 MECHASSAULT 2

Exclusive First Review of Microsoft's fab new bot blaster!



047 MEDAL OF HONOR: DOGS OF WAR

Where does the series go now? Find out in our exclusive interview!

014 HITMAN BLOOD MONEY

Ol' baldy is back and ready for action.



016 SUPER MONKEY BALL

How many things can you do with a monkey in a ball?



032 Q&A: LEGO STAR WARS

Exclusive interview with the creators.



018 GRAND THEFT AUTO SAN ANDREAS

The crime-drive-a-thon is making its way to Xbox very soon!



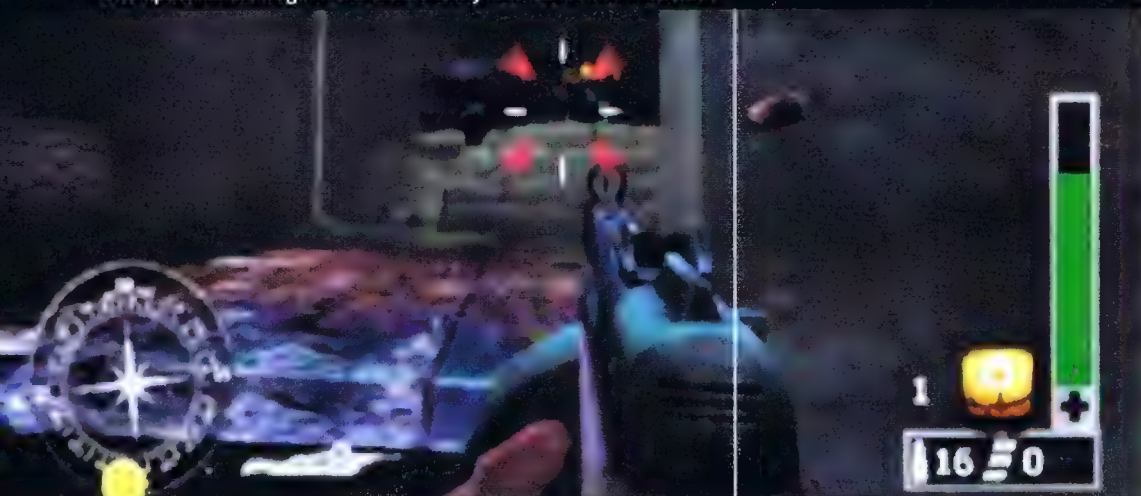
052 FORZA MOTORSPORT

Could this be the next big racer for Xbox? Find out why we're so excited in our exclusive preview!



090 CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR PLAYGUIDE

A complete walkthrough of Activision's classy new World War II shooter.



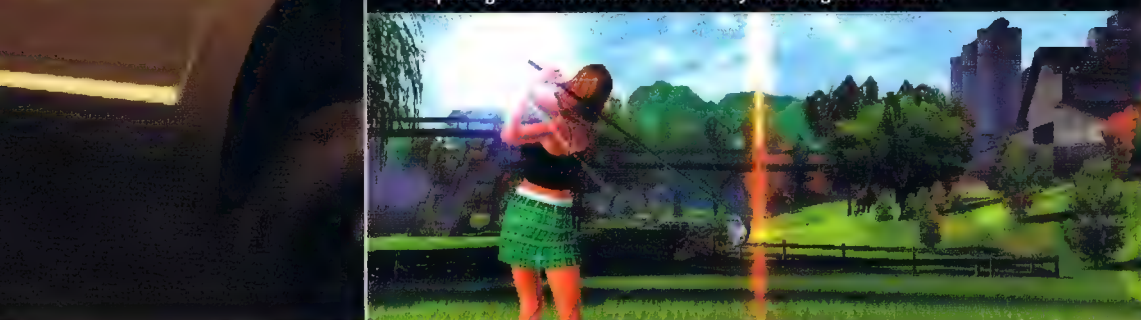
070 SCRAPLAND

Robots, sci-fi - the whole lot is thrown into this unique adventure game.



078 OUTLAW GOLF 2

A sports game that relieves the stress by throwing out the rules.



FIRST LOOK

- 014 HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY
- 016 SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE

INCOMING: NEWS

- 018 GTA SAN ANDREAS CONFIRMED
- 022 CHEAT CRACKDOWN ON PRO EVO
- 023 THE REF HAS GONE BLIND!
- 024 WRESTLEMANIA 21
- 026 BARGAIN HUNTER X
- 028 JADE EMPIRE
- 028 FEAR & RESPECT
- 030 GALLERY
- 032 INTERVIEW: LEGO STAR WARS
- 033 PLAYBOY THE MANSION
- 034 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
- 036 MERCENARIES
- 037 ODDWORLD STRANGER'S WRATH

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS

- 047 MEDAL OF HONOR: DOGS OF WAR
- 052 FORZA MOTORSPORT
- 058 SPLINTER CELL 3: CHAOS THEORY

REVIEWS

- 064 MECHASSAULT 2: LONE WOLF
- 070 SCRAPLAND
- 074 ESPN NHL 2005
- 074 ESPN NFL 2005
- 076 ESPN NBA 2005
- 078 OUTLAW GOLF 2
- 079 SIBERIA II
- 082 CABELA'S DEER HUNT 2005 SEASON
- 083 CABELA'S BIG GAME HUNTER 2005

PLAY:MORE

- 090 CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR COMPLETE PLAYGUIDE
- 094 HINTS & CHEATS
- 096 GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT 10-MINUTE MASTERCLASS

REGULARS

- 042 CHARTS
- 044 LETTERS
- 050 SUBSCRIPTIONS
- 084 REVIEWS DIRECTORY
- 098 NEXT MONTH

ON THE DEMO DVD:

- >> FORZA MOTORSPORT
- >> STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO
- >> WORMS FORTS: UNDER SIEGE
- >> OUTLAW GOLF 2
- >> PRINCE OF PERSIA 2
- >> CONFLICT VIETNAM
- >> DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE
- >> CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK
- >> AND LOADS MORE!

DISC 37 GUIDE STARTS PAGE 008

A whole new **game**. A whole new **world**.

The world's best fighting game is now the first ever online 3D fighting game.



Available February 2005



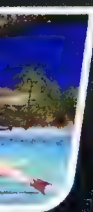
Dead or Alive Ultimate™ and Dead or Alive®. ©Tecmo, LTD. 1986, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002-2005, 2004. Tecmo® and the Tecmo logo are registered trademarks of Tecmo, LTD. Team Ninja™ and the Team Ninja logo are trademarks of Tecmo, LTD. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox Live, the Live logo and the Xbox logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. SEGA

Team Ninja stand ready to take the fighting game franchise into uncharted waters yet again. "XBN"

"Both Hardcore and DOA2 are rebuilt from the ground up to make your Xbox pulse with power." Official Xbox Magazine

"most exciting fighting game of the year." GMR

ALIVE ATE



Heaven on earth is here with the first 3D online fighting game to date, Dead or Alive Ultimate. Experience the first "Virtual Arcade" with a double disk pack featuring the original DOA and a totally redesigned DOA2, creating a whole new world in online fighting games. DOA2, built from the ground up on a brand new engine, features new interactive worlds, never-before seen costumes, mind-blowing graphics, earth-shattering new moves, and exclusive new cut scenes that reveal secrets from the past. Plus, special bonus content contains a behind the scenes peek at the making of DOAU and the developers behind the series, the DOA3 Booster Disc, collectable trading cards and more!

DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE

First Look

World-exclusive scoops of the newest Xbox games in development

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY P014

Agent 47 is back, and out to kill or be killed

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE P016

Marvellous monkey madness from Sega

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN
XBOX MAGAZINE
EXCLUSIVE
SCREENSHOTS



↑ Aww, you shouldn't have. A bullet in the brain? For me? How sweet...

Hitman: Blood Money

Slaphead's back everybody! Run for cover!

Dev: IO Interactive	Pub: Eidos
Release: Autumn 05	Live: None
Players: 1	

WE'VE MISSED the man who never misses. Without his suits, bowling ball bounce and Routemaster surname, the world hasn't been the same. But Agent 47 returns to a darker time, where the hunter becomes the hunted, and we're going to pull out every stop to save his Brasso-buffed head.

For the first time in a *Hitman* game, there are serious consequences for cock-ups. Beforehand it was still theoretically possible to complete a mission even if 47 was spotted, but this time around those NPCs are smart. Dead smart.

If 47 screws up a kill, there are a number of chain reactions that take place from that point onwards. If you're tactless about your business, word will soon spread throughout the NPCs that you're a danger. It's this life-endangering gossip which makes every person in the game a potential threat, but it is also this gossip that, strangely enough, 47 will be able to use to his advantage.

If a kill goes badly, people will soon know about it, which includes those people who will be willing to help for cash. With the money earned throughout missions completed without 'mess', Agent 47 will be able to bribe and cover up those that do go awry. Developer IO is keeping hush as to how this will be implemented, but there are a few theories. Perhaps 47 will be able to pay people to

claim responsibility, or bribe binmen into taking away the corpse. Thankfully, many missions can be accomplished in such a way that they look like freak accidents. If you succeed in giving the appearance that these kills were all acts of God, there's every chance 47 will be able to walk around freely without ever raising suspicion. But anyone who's played the previous games will know that's highly unlikely.

The money system isn't just about covering up tracks though; there are vast rewards for spending wisely on equipment. 'Blood money' can be spent on upgrading pieces of kit or buying new weapons. One vital piece 47 must care for is his sniper rifle. Rasmus Hoenggaard, game director for *Blood Money* told us, "We've a core set of armaments, a large number of which will have upgrades. These include things like precision, power, and bullet capacity to name a few. I can't tell you about all the weapons at the moment, I love the M4A1. It's a very colourful and versatile weapon that can be modified and pulled in a more sniper-like direction."

According to IO, there are 'very many' weapons and a 'great number' of different items that can be combined and mixed to create every level of lethal, upgradeable, killing apparatus. But, while there are new upgrades and seemingly unstoppable killing weapons, the devilish *Hitman* gameplay dynamics remain. 47 will still have to get close to the (often well-guarded) targets and, although relative calm may reign until the bullets start flying, all hell is guaranteed to once again break loose. Better dust off that violin case again then, hadn't we?



↑ We'll have to use the environment to stay alive and avoid bullets.



↑ This Christmas-themed level will be full of anything but seasonal cheer and goodwill to all men once Agent 47 gets in on the party.

Bonus info

HEADING FOR TROUBLE

News regarding whether Agent 47 will once again be assassinating people with turbans or impersonating Sheiks has yet to be announced. We've got a funny feeling we won't be seeing any of it this time around though...

I-SPY

Rumour has it that in *Blood Money* Agent 47 finds out that his secret web of underground contacts has been infiltrated by a mole. He'll have to kill the double agent, before the double agent kills him.

POTTING SHED

With Agent 47 on the run and NPCs now smart enough to spot him out, it's unlikely he'll keep his entire stash of weapons in a potting shed as before. Maybe he won't even have a permanent arsenal, and that'd be interesting!



↑ Once again we'll have to scope out a hit and learn all the exits before moving in.



↑ One too many sherries and it will look like an accident... exactly what 47 wants.

The Art Of Killing

This is Agent 47's rifle and all its upgradeable goodness.

AGENT 47'S KIT will increase as he buys and finds upgrades to his standard sniper rifle. These will come in various shapes and sizes, and range from improved silencers to assisted triggers (ideal of those fully, or semi-automatic moments). Agent 47 will also have to find close-range silencers with superior suppression so no victim's cronies will hear the sound of the gun from the next room (or next chair in some cases). Our hero will also be able to buy improved sniper scopes, night vision scopes, and double-round magazine clips. Hopefully all this gadgetry will mean that poor old Santa doesn't feel a thing when he's taken out by our favourite slaphead. Failing that of course, we can always forgo the gun and simply push him to his death or snap his neck.



↑ We can't wait until we get to try collecting all the parts to this baby.



↑ Control the monkey's glide in for a smooth landing on the target.

Super Monkey Ball Deluxe

Exclusive play of the biggest Monkey Ball game ever!

Dev: Sega	Pub: Sega
Release: March 05	Live: None
Players: 1-4	

POPPING *SUPER Monkey Ball Deluxe* in your Xbox is like opening a bag of monkeys in the lounge - you can't help but laugh at the comedy that plays out in front of you. Everything from the classic Sega Japanese presentation to the sheer madness of the mini-games is off its head. And that's what makes this bonkers puzzle game so unique.

SMB 1 and *2* appeared on GameCube, but Sega has now released a souped-up version on Xbox that incorporates both games and then some - 46 never-seen-before levels to be exact. Amazingly though, the Japanese company hasn't gone down the Xbox Live route. Surely a co-op or head-to-head option over Live would have been a laugh?

There are a staggering 300 levels to sink your choppers into and, while they start off ludicrously easy, you'll be tearing your hair out, climbing the walls and going cross-eyed as you get further into the madness. 114 levels have been ripped from the original and 140 taken from the sequel. Add to that 46 brand new ones and you've got quite a package. It might look like child's play from these exclusive and very colourful screenshots, but these mini-games will test the skill and patience of everyone.

You play each level as a cute little monkey trapped inside a transparent ball. Don't worry, it's all veggie-friendly and we're sure the little blighter

came to no harm... mainly because he's not real. Controls are mindlessly simple to pick up but the gameplay is as addictive as honey-roasted peanuts. You have to tilt the platform the monkey ball rests on to move it the way you want the critter to go. As easy as it sounds, there are time limits, puzzles, mazes, obstacles, opponents and bananas to collect along the way that makes things interesting.

As fun as the single-player Ultimate mode is, *Monkey Ball's* real charm comes out when you plug in three other pads and get your mates, parents or kids in on the action for multiplayer madness. Party games don't get much better than this and it's a pity Sega didn't get the game out in time for Christmas. Come on, how many more times can you and the family sit around the tree playing Monopoly?

There's a Practice mode for the real chimps among us but Challenge and Competition modes are where the multiplayer fun can be found. The variety of mini-games is staggering and you're bound to quickly find your favourites (see *Banana Splits*, right) as well ones that drive you round the bend. For the *Deluxe* version, Challenge mode integrates three different skill settings (Beginner, Advanced and Expert) into the game, rather than you having to complete each section independently.

From our exclusive look at the first build of the game to wing its way to Australia, *Super Monkey Ball Deluxe* is shaping up to be everything its title suggests. You'll be able to find out for yourself too around the game's launch, with an exclusive playable demo that's in the works.



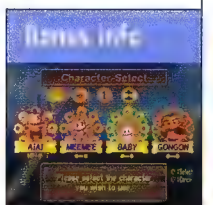
↑ Monkey football is insane - what else did you expect?



↑ Tilt the green platform for maximum speed.



↑ It's not Pro Evo 4 or FIFA 2005 but if you fancy a soccer game with a banana twist, this is it!



PICK ME!
You get four monkeys to play with and, as you'd expect, each one has its own set of stats that you'll need to take into consideration depending on which event you play. Aiai is the male all-rounder, Meemee is the female all-rounder, Baby is the lightest of all, meaning you can go faster, and Gongon is the hard and heavy option.

GAME FOR A LAUGH
One of our favourite games is called Monkey Target and it sees you taking off from a platform in the sky using the ball as wings to guide yourself onto the target. To spice things up though, there are all kinds of obstacles (wind and mines just being two of them) that'll bend your mind as you search for the perfect landing.



↑ Get your mates involved for some four-player madness from start to finish.



↑ Collect pick-ups for extra time when racing head to head.

Banana Splits

AS GOOD AS collecting bananas in hard-to-reach places is, head to head with friends is where it's at. And the variety of daft mini-games is awesome - there's everything from straight-up racing and fighting to snooker and football-themed games. Each event has been given that unique Sega makeover and you won't be able to stop yourself laughing. The simplicity of each event means that anyone will be able to get the hang of things after a few attempts. Look out for Monkey Target, Monkey Billiard, Monkey Bowling, Monkey Golf, Monkey Boat, Monkey Shot, Monkey Baseball, Monkey Dogfight and Monkey Tennis. That's a lot of monkeys.



↑ Golf gets a face-lift in Super Monkey Ball Deluxe.



↑ The monkeys are let loose on the pool table.

Incoming

All the essential news, exclusive previews and latest screenshots from the wonderful world of Xbox

P022 BLACK HAWK DOWN

32-player deathmatches are coming your way!

P022 CHEATERS BEGONE!

Konami cracks down on *Pro Evolution Soccer 4*.

P023 OI! ARE YOU BLIND, REF?

EA to introduce bad refs into *UEFA Champions League*.

P024 ON XBOX 2...

The latest rumours about the next generation.

P024 WRESTLEMANIA 21

Sweaty men in spandex. Awesome.

P026 BARGAIN HUNTER X

A selection of new games at low low prices!

Aye Carumba! San Andreas confirmed for Xbox

Grand Theft Auto remains the best bet for troubled Take Two Interactive

AFTER MONTHS OF speculation and fan anguish, Take Two Interactive has finally confirmed what everyone suspected: that *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* will be coming to the Xbox. The gangster lifestyle simulator will go on sale for Xbox and PC on the 7th of June in North America, and on the 10th of June in Europe and Australia. Originally designated as a title exclusive to the PlayStation 2, the game is following the precedent of *GTA III* and *GTA: Vice City* in migrating to the more powerful Xbox platform. This is further proof that there are many blockbuster games left in Microsoft's console, even after the release of *Halo 2*.

San Andreas originally featured way back in the first *Grand Theft Auto* game, as one of three cities to explore along with *Vice City* and *Liberty City*. Once a larger-than-life parody of San Francisco, the scale has radically expanded to encompass an entire contiguous state, including homages to Los Angeles and Las Vegas, connected by roads, desert, and a complex ongoing story.

Whereas in previous *GTA* games the player was ultimately limited to stringing together missions like some kind of glorified criminal errand boy, *San Andreas* grants players control of an entire gang. Following the traditional path of upgrades and ongoing challenges, there's the opportunity to buy entire criminal operations like casinos. A more complex system than the traditional health bar is employed. To maintain energy levels, players have to eat. Eat too much, and the on-screen character gets fat. Compared to a first person shooter full of glitchy cut-scenes and large groups of avoidable enemies who simply fight each other, it's hardly surprising that such a rich gaming universe has received near universal acclaim.

Six months may seem like a long time to wait, but considering the differences in programming a game for the PC and Xbox compared to the PS2, this delay is understandable. Different memory handling techniques and



↑ GTA's urban wars, '90s style.



grand theft auto San Andreas

P028 HOMEBOYS GO WILD

KOTOR meets *Boyz n Da Hood*? We can't believe it either.

P028 DEMONS & SPIRITS

New characters & monsters for *Jade Empire*.

P030 GALLERY

Brand new eye candy for the hot, upcoming games.

P032 LEGO STAR WARS

New info about the game, straight from the horse's mouth.

P033 BUNNY ACTION

More titillating details on *Playboy The Mansion*.

P034 INCREDIBLY GREEN

Guess what they've done to the Hulk? They've GTA'd him!

P035 COLD FEAR

Do you smell that? Smells like survival horror.

P036 MERCENARIES

One of the only excellent adaptations of GTA we've seen.

P037 ODDWORLD STRANGER'S WRATH

This is one freaky looking first-person shooter.



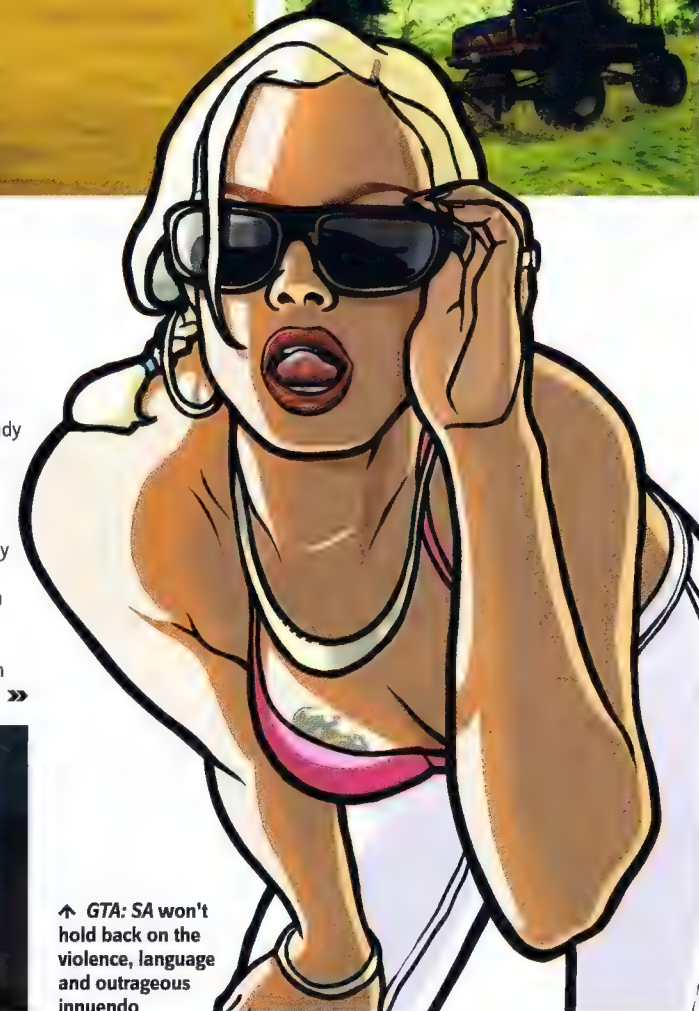
"It's a logical move and a guaranteed money-spinner"

» markedly different system performance ensured it would be a huge job from the start, and Rockstar North are doubtless working on ways to cram as much new content as possible into the new versions of their baby. In addition to ironing out the rough edges of what has been a notoriously bug-infested franchise, we can expect serious cosmetic improvements, too.

Just look at the transformation that *GTA III* and *Vice City* underwent when they first came to the Xbox. The polygon counts were higher, the cars

were glossier, the lighting was sharper, and the dialogue was actually lip-synched. Admittedly there's not much room for improvement in the music department, with the early 90s vibe already captured perfectly with a selection of fictitious radio stations that would be right at home in a fantasy version of southern California.

It's a logical move, and a guaranteed money-spinner, but not everything has been rosy for Take Two Interactive. Despite the massive sales success of *San Andreas* on PS2, along with frequent accolades of "Game of the Year," the company's overall sales haven't significantly increased from the previous year. The game firm has been subject to investigation by the



↑ *GTA: SA* won't hold back on the violence, language and outrageous innuendo





» American Securities Exchange Commission since December 2001, regarding certain alleged irregularities in the company's accounting practices.

The company recently confirmed that it has received a "Wells Notice" announcing a recommendation that the SEC bring civil charges "seeking an injunction and monetary damages" against Take Two, its chairman, an employee, and two former officers. The issue has yet to be resolved once and for all, but Take Two has set aside US\$7.5 million dollars to pay off any punitive fines the SEC may impose.

And now that EA has an exclusive deal with the NFL, Take 2's ESPN line of sports games has

had its value seriously deflated.

While *GTA* continues to be a cash cow, another big franchise is an ongoing headache for the company. *Duke Nukem Forever*, originally announced seven years ago, is still no closer to release. The first person shooter is expected to continue the adventures of everybody's favourite stripper-patronising, steroid-abusing, alien-killing powerhouse, assuming it is ever released. Despite years of promises, the game is still nowhere near release, thanks to multiple engine changeovers and other behind-the-scenes chicanery from developer 3D Realms. If a console version ever materialises, we can expect it for Xbox 2, or when hell freezes over, whichever comes first.



STOP PRESS Ubi-takeover?

EA HAS recently purchased a 20 per cent share of French-based publisher, Ubisoft. A spokesperson from EA commented that it's merely an investment, but Infogrames CEO Bruno Bonnell tore into the claim, saying EA "did not enter Ubisoft's capital to just stay at that level". He then said that his firm would be prepared to help Ubisoft fight off a takeover bid by EA should it occur.

GTA Scares burglars

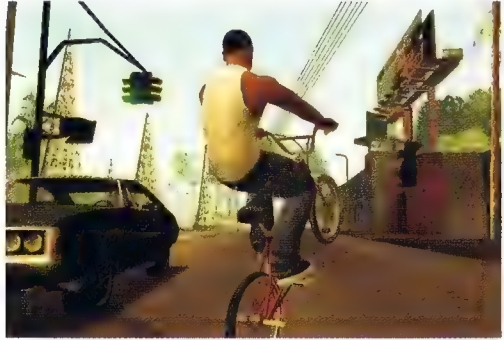
Grand Theft Auto is often cited as a prime example of why games are unsuitable for little kids (though adult content is excluded from games for adults, since "only kids play games" - Catch 22). The car-jacking, violence, swearing and sexism that permeate the series are considered to be a bad influence. Yet in a recent real-life home invasion, the game proved to be a force for good. A Texas woman and her three grandsons were minding their own business when burglars stormed their home. Yet the background radio chatter from the in-game police caused the hoods to panic, ultimately leading to their arrest. Ironically, this rank stupidity on the part of the offenders goes some way towards shattering the glamorous mystique surrounding crime that games like *GTA* try to portray.



↑ "Get outta my dreams, Get into my car..." oh wait, this is a car-jacking.



↑ "Where did you get the bike?" "That's a chopper, Baby."





Free Downloads:

GTA fans with PCs will be pleased to know that there's a way to get a fresh dose of GTA action - for free! Rockstar Games has now made *GTA II* freely available to download from their website, along with the first GTA which has been available for some time. Both games feature the same car-stealing, pedestrian-killing action of *GTA III* and onwards, only the action is presented in a top-down, pseudo-2D format. There's hours and hours of fun to be had with each, and all the download will cost you is the effort of filling in a few personal details.

<http://www.rockstargames.com/classics/>



The Warriors

After years in development, this film franchise is finally inching towards a video game release date. The Warriors is basically a re-telling of the "Ten Little Indians" story, with a New York street gang framed for murder who have to fight their way to safety through every gang in the city. Clearly an inspiration for beat-em-ups like *Double Dragon* and *Streets of Rage*, things are finally coming full circle with The Warriors due for release in mid-2005. It's only coming to PlayStation 2 at this stage, but experience tells us that if a series is successful enough, Take Two are willing to migrate it over to the Xbox as well. The GTA series is living proof.



← Eat too much junk, and you'll lose your fine figure.



Grand Theftendo

In one of the more bizarre instances of reverse-engineering in the world of video games, one talented and determined fan is porting Grand Theft Auto III to run on the Nintendo Entertainment System. The graphics aren't quite up to the standard of the original, running on the 8-bit system at 256x240 resolution with 2-bit colour off a 2-bit palette. Imagine, the entire Liberty City borough of Portland, running on a 1.79 Mhz processor, brought to life with 6502 Assembly Language! It boggles the mind. Hopefully Brian Provinciano's efforts won't be regarded as Grand Theft Intellectual Property by Rockstar, and ultimately see the light of day for retro gamers everywhere.

<http://www.grandtheftendo.com>



World War 32

True 32-player madness arrives on Xbox

THERE ARE BIG things brewing at Climax. We had a recent hands-on with forthcoming *Delta Force* game *Black Hawk Down*, and it's shaping up well. We saw the same title a few months back, and though a sturdy effort, it never really grabbed us by the collar and headbutted some love into us. One 32-player deathmatch later and all that's changed. The fact that this is actually happening for Xbox is a great sign, but the fact it's happening without lag and across a variety of specially designed 32-player maps is even better.

We were worried the large maps would prove nothing more than a random free-for-all, with players falling as quick as they've spawned. Not so. There are sniping places galore, the opportunity to lay claymore across bridges, tripwires, even the chance to go head to head with someone in an underwater knife fight. We saw it all, we did it all. And, rumour has it that there's going to be some groundbreaking news in a month or two, about even greater Live options. When we say groundbreaking, we mean it too.

Single-player mode is almost as impressive, with vast, sweeping landscapes. Furthermore,

events are, according to original *Delta Force* developer NovaLogic, '85 per cent reality', based on the true experiences of the Black Hawk team. The actual Black Hawk Somalia veterans have even contributed to the title, offering advice such as the use of AK-47s, and the layout of buildings and towns across Somalia. They've also contributed to the backstory, which should be interesting. There were some serious issues revolving around the actual reasons the Black Hawk team were in the area, and all of these are played out before the crash - about halfway into the game.

Drug runners can expect the standard-issue response (a big bag of whoop-ass), there'll be great fly-bys where you get to rain down missiles on the rebels, as well as protecting convoys from gun-waving nuts. There seem to be plenty of thrills and spills in single-player, but we still can't stop thinking about that multiplayer option...

When you're lying in the crew's nest of a sinking ship, taking pot shots at 31 other gamers below, it makes you feel proud to own an Xbox. Keep all eyes on this one folks - we suspect it might be something of a hotty.



↑ Delta Force troops will be dropped into the chaos.



↑ The Somali environment will be staggeringly hostile. Just as we like it!



↑ Take out rebels from the safety of a Black Hawk. Well, that was the idea anyway.



↑ Four-player split screen - nearly as good as the 32-player Live option!

EA's STREET series keeps on growing. The company recently announced its latest American football game, NFL STREET 2. More soon...

Foul Play

Konami gives cheeky Pro Evo 4 Live matchers the red card

YOU MAY have noticed this when playing a *Pro Evo 4* Live match, but the moment the 90th minute is about to tick away, or the moment you're about to slam in the winning goal, your opponent quits out. Hardly fair, is it? Especially as until recently, quitters were never penalised - unlike *FIFA* where they're automatically given a 3-0 loss.

Well, we had a few words with a few inside people about getting the problem sorted, and we got some great feedback. They told us Konami was always pro-active in listening to players' concerns and comments, and as a result, an update was imminent. Hopefully by the time you read this, the whole 'cheating' thing will once again be the sole pastime of the Argentinians.



↑ You cheat! This is what you'll get - a red card and a dressing down!



↑ If your rival scores don't quit out, okay?



↑ Foul people and face the consequences.

Out of This World!

Halo 2 smashes the five million mark... but cheaters are loving it

WE ALL KNEW it was going to be big, but we didn't think we'd be seeing figures like this so soon after its release. It seems everyone's favourite shooter has outdone itself, with the recent announcement of sales in excess of five million units since going on sale in November, bringing the total sales of *Halo* games past the 11 million mark. *Halo 2* has also seen a huge increase in Live players, with in excess of 28 million hours logged since it went Live. That works out at around 91 minutes per session, approximately the same length as a movie.

However, since going Live, there have been a few sly swines that have been tempted to cheat, something Bungie is taking very seriously. "Anyone who is confirmed to be a cheater will be penalised up to and including the complete deletion of their Xbox Live account," says a spokesperson for the company. Bungie is also encouraging cheaters to be reported by following these simple steps.

Firstly, use the in-game feedback system and report the player to Xbox Live. If you go to the Players tab in your Friends menu, you can see people you've played with recently. You can highlight their name and select Leave Feedback, then pick the appropriate feedback. Then go to the forums at bungie.net and list exactly what happened. Most importantly, please include the name of the alleged cheater and if possible, a link to the game stats for the game in question. Be careful though; do not get into specifics on how to actually perform a cheat as this will only make things worse. If you suspect you've discovered a new cheat, Bungie suggests you send a message to Forum Frankie with a description, and it'll check it out with the test team.

Get snooping all four-point-something-million honest *Halo 2* lovers, and hopefully the cheaters will be booted out for good.



↑ Quit out in a sulk and you'll forfeit the game.



↑ One way to earn those points is with the handy rocket launcher!

Mega Man fans rejoice! It seems Capcom will be releasing the Mega Man Anniversary Collection on Xbox some time in the near future!

You're Not Singing Anymore

UEFA to introduce blind referees?

THE FORTHCOMING *UEFA Champions League* from EA, due out in a couple of months, is promising an interesting, and possibly quite annoying, new feature.

For the first time, we'll actually see bad referee decisions being called, as well as bad offside decisions and dodgy linesmen calls. But assistant producer Mat Prior told us not to worry. "There will be bad calls, but not a dozen a match. Just because we implement a new feature doesn't mean it gives us the right to go overboard and put it everywhere. In fact, I've been playing the game for ages now and only ever seen a smattering of bad decisions." And

in a move as poetic as the game itself, a goal gets disallowed just as he's reassuring us.

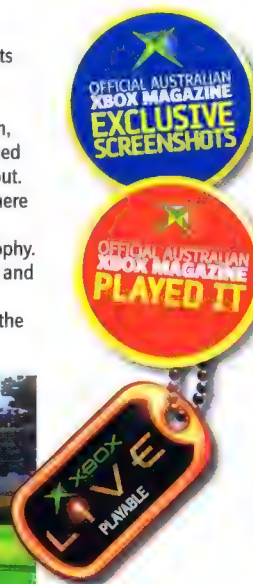
This affects the other new feature - the interactive manager. You'll be able to design him, stand him on the sideline, then have abuse hurled at you in-game. But he's got every reason to shout. There is a 50-stage story mode you can play, where you start by winning a place in the Champions League and progress to (hopefully) taking the trophy. Transfers will be made, the club will be bought, and scandal will rock the players. In fact, *UEFA Champions League* will be like playing through the back pages of the local tabloids. Can't wait!



↑ Widescreen shows the drama of a game!



↑ Training mode is vital to keep the ref at bay!



News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

Pinky's Perky

News came creeping out from the *Doom* movie set recently regarding everyone's favourite demon, Pinky. Apparently, a technician called Pinky has to be confined to a cybernetic wheelchair after a bad teleporting accident. Unfortunately, the teleportation means he keeps on mutating until he becomes something remotely resembling the Pinky creature from *Doom 3*. Mmm... what do we think? Well, nobody say *Street Fighter: The Movie* because we all know how that turned out.

The Name's Bond...

Okay, so *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* was more soggy Roger Moore than Sean Connery classic, but rumour has it EA's spy series could soon be calling upon original *GoldenEye* developer Free Radical for inspiration. The company, which has just completed work on *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect* for EA, could well be returning 007 to his glory days. With the movies supposedly returning to their darker roots, let's hope the next game does the same.

Very Bad Idea

Indy developer Nagual announced recently its intention to develop a GTA-style game called *Dealer: Chronic, Pills & Coke*. We're not sure who the hell is going to pick this up for publication, if it even gets past the drawing board, but apparently you'll be playing a dealer intent on creating a huge drug business. As well as drugs, there'll be prostitution, extortion and the chance to experience the effects of your wares before you sell them, as your character stumbles around the screen off his head. Like we say, we've got a bad feeling about this.

Codies' Red Card

BAD NEWS for *Club Football*.

Codemasters has announced that the tailored soccer series is being put on hold. A Codemasters spokesman told us: "It was a tough decision, but one we needed to take. The critical reaction to this year's code wasn't as good as we expected, and we just didn't want to keep coming back to something that wasn't as good as it should be." With both *FIFA* and *Pro Evo* going Live, it looks as though *Club Football* will have a lot of catching up to do if we're ever to see it again.



↑ Club Football takes a bow.

ON XBOX 2...

The web is running wild with Xbox 2 speculation

THOSE RUMOURS JUST keep on coming as the announcement of Xbox 2's arrival creeps ever closer. And, as well as growing in abundance, they seem to be growing ever more crazy too.

Word has it that Xbox 2 will not be a single console, but three. These three versions will come in various 'flavours'. The first is your basic 'vanilla' Xbox 2, or 'Xbox Next' as it's being called. This baby will not include a hard drive so it'll come at a far reduced price compared to the others. The next version, the 'vanilla with sprinkles', will be the Xbox Next HD, the same as before only with a hard drive. The third version (chocolate swirl with squirty cream) will be the Xbox Next PC that doubles as an entry level PC with Windows, PC software, CD burner, keyboard, mouse, and media centre that will play films, music and offer a photo suite. But, as we know, these rumours can get wildly exaggerated towards the build up of a console release. Exciting as they are, until Microsoft says otherwise, take it as nothing more than speculation.

On more sturdy ground is news of EA's first officially announced Xbox 2 games. Both the forthcoming *Battlefield: Modern Combat* and *FPS Black* will see a next-gen version alongside or just after the current gen versions of the games.



↑ A Black screen - our lot at the moment.

Meanwhile, Climax announced a next-gen development tool it's calling 'Tomcat'. Tony Beckwith, president of Climax Racing said, "We've taken a proactive step and developed a unique toolset that allows us to fully exploit the potential for outstanding shading effects. The system allows our artists to create amazing shader combinations faster, and without the need for programmer support. As soon as we started working on Tomcat, we knew we had something special on our hands. This is an exciting step, and could mean that in the future a wide range of brilliant games built on the Tomcat technology could be filling the shop shelves, not just those by Climax."

Finally, it seems EA is seeking people to join its Xbox 2 team. According to its jobs page, EA wants to hire a Software Engineer to work on the Graphical User Interface (GUI) for its Xbox 2 launch titles. The position will be at EA Canada in British Columbia so, if you've got an impressive enough CV, you'd better buy some airmail paper and get scribbling.

CLIMAX

Spandex Attack!

After a drought of wrestling games, in wades this baby...



AH, THE ACRID stink of sweat, how we've missed it. Redneck rumbles and all that glistens must be garrotted, *Wrestlemania 21* is on its way to Xbox. So, what's changed during this famine of fat guys in leotards? Quite a bit. A new character evolution system will allow us to progress from the lowliest fan to the highest levels of adoration. New costumes, moves and rewards will open depending entirely on how we play the game, as every choice is on a tier system. For example, choose to specialise in submissions and ever greater submission moves will be unlocked, as well as a fierce reputation.

This rep can be transferred to online play (four-player multiplayer on all match types) where we'll be able to create custom belts and challenge all-comers to try their hand at claiming them.

Other features include the 'pro-reversal system' that can counter every attacking move, plus motion capturing. The fancy 'endomorph muscle flexing' system will animate expanding muscles and heaving chests, right down to small muscular details such as calves clenching. Then there's what THQ is calling 'endomorph facial deformation' which, besides the depiction of emotion, will show faces battered and smashed to a right ruddy pulp.

But it's the arenas and options that'll really get us into a headlock. Sixteen WWE arenas, 12 pay-per-view rumbles in custom-built rings and arenas, and the full contingent of Raw wrestlers and rings will feature, as will all the Smackdown fighters. Velocity is even thrown in for good measure so Raw fighters can go head to head with Smackdown fighters. Wrestling is making one hell of an Xbox come-back.



↑ New facial expressions will allow us to enjoy every bone-crunching move.



↑ Counters should mean headlocks are avoided.

↑ "Dude, I draw the line at waxing the crack of my arse."

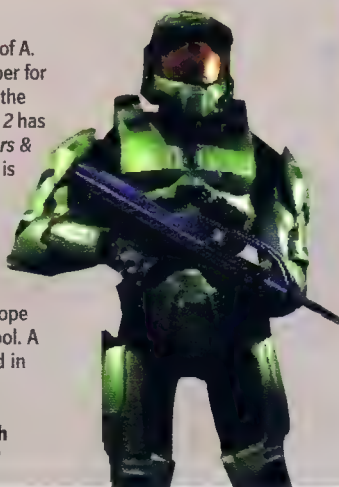
Keep your eyes peeled for forthcoming title *WarDevil*. The title is rumoured to be both Xbox and Xbox 2 releases, and it looks superb.

BIZARRE Weird goings-on from the world of Xbox

Disaster Chief

More worrying news from the US of A. *Stars & Stripes*, the daily newspaper for the US military, has reported that the military's initial shipment of *Halo 2* has sold out. The official line from *Stars & Stripes* says, "If your trigger finger is itching for aliens, don't despair if you didn't land a copy of *Halo 2* last week. Reinforcements have arrived and more are on the way." Apparently the number sold exceeded 25,000. Let's just hope they're not using it as a training tool. A plasma sword is all well and good in space but against Iraqis?

→ Master Chief - saviour of Earth and American Army role model?



Mega Bucks

When he's not saving the world, the big green lump enjoys pottering around his neighbourhood. From rescuing kittens to collecting litter, MC is a pillar of his community. He even banks locally. The First Mutual Bank in his home town proudly displays the banking habits of its most famous customer outside the branch. The bank even shows a healthy interest in 'Earth', whoever the hell that is. Maybe it's a *Halo 3* character.

WE'RE TARGETING YEAR 12 MATHS STUDENTS.

If you have a passion for flying, you could command anything from fighters, strike bombers and transport aircraft, to armed reconnaissance, transport and anti-submarine helicopters in the Navy, Army or Air Force.

Initial assessment and testing puts you under no obligation to proceed with your application. However, if successful, we'll provide you with the

skills and all the training necessary to become a Navy, Army or Air Force Pilot.

If you have at least Year 12 Advanced Maths and English, are coordinated, highly motivated and meet Defence Force entry requirements, we've got you in our sights.

So call 13 19 01 or visit www.defencejobs.gov.au/aviation

PILOTS WANTED. CALL 13 19 01. WWW.DEFENCEJOBS.GOV.AU



IN MY OPINION

"Go, Johnny, Go Go Go!"

John Howard recently became Australia's second longest serving Prime Minister. With control of the senate, he's hinted at some big changes over the next three years, and on paper they look good for gamers. Industrial reform (lower overheads for business = cheaper goods & services), free trade deals (cheaper goods) and tax reform (more money) could have a trickle-down effect of cheaper games for everyone.

There is a down side, however, and it has nothing to do with money. Censorship has everything to do with power, and conservative governments tend to err on the side of banning anything that could "harm the kids." Never mind that most gamers are adults. Never mind that parents are ultimately responsible for the entertainment content of their children.

Never mind that even a child can tell that games aren't real, and have no influence on their ability to tell right from wrong. The Office of Film & Literature Classification has a vested interest in whipping up controversy where none exists, as was seen with the recent banning of *Leisure Suit Larry*. This institution is on the receiving end of most the criticism directed at a government censorship policy that struggles for relevance in the 21st century, a policy that wags its moral finger at gamers while modern artists compete furiously on innovative new ways to sculpt with poop.

Besides, can they really screen every bit of media in the country? Every TV segment, every zine, every pizza coupon, every newspaper, every day? Of course not. Their view is by definition selective, a tool of control by its very nature. It is a sham, and our entertainment dollars are at its mercy. The Matrix has us.

After the election, little John said that he was going to serve not only those who voted for him, but those who voted against him. Are you reading this, John? Now's your chance. Have a little chat with the OFLC and find out why there needs to be an R18+ rating for games.

On the off chance that our leader does not read the Official Australian Xbox Magazine, now would be an excellent opportunity for our more community-motivated readers to write to their MP, senator, or local broadsheet, stating the obvious case for a more, er, liberal gaming market.

Sharaz Jek is an independent journalist. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Official Australian Xbox Magazine.

AGENT



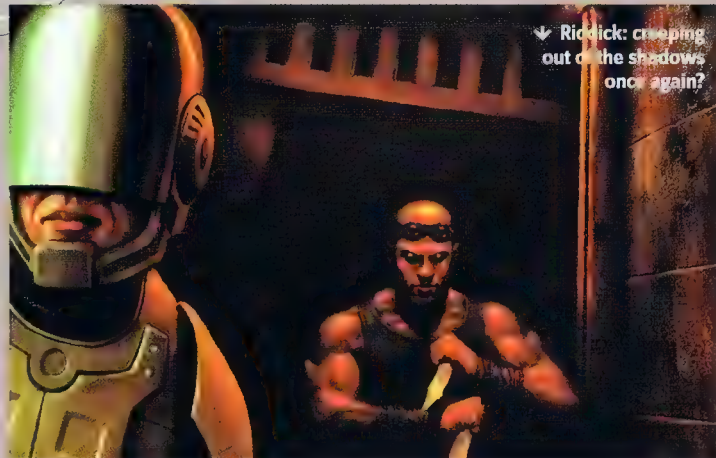
Delving into enemy territory to bring you the latest gaming gossip.

DIESEL POWERED

My Hollywood contact has been following bulky slaphead Vin Diesel about and is unearthing all manner of Xbox goodness. It seems Diesel's Tigon Studios has teamed with *X-Men* director Bryan Singer. The two are apparently creating a game based on the American Secret Service. Developed under the top secret working title of *Secret Service* it's rumoured to be a tactical action-adventure game. We'll play as a Secret Service agent assigned to the Presidential bodyguard team.

DIESEL TURBO POWERED

Following Mr Diesel back to his Beverly Hills suede love shack, my contact also learned more news on the future of Riddick. While plugging the US DVD release of *Chronicles Of Riddick*, Diesel let slip that a sequel to the game was in development. Once the muscle-packed ex-dancer realised what he'd said he was quickly ushered out the building. I'll have more details once I track the lumbering brute down again.



↓ Riddick: creeping out of the shadows once again?

SPACE GLADIATOR

Staying in Hollywood, I found myself fastened to the underside of director Ridley Scott's Oldsmobile, *Cape Fear*-style recently. Through an intricate system of wires and tin-cans on string, I managed to dig up this scurrilous slab of gossip. It seems the director could be turning his hand to a movie adaptation of *Halo 2*. I think *Halo 2* is more 'Michael Bay', than

'*Gladiator*', but let's hope whoever gets the job does us proud. No cliffhanger please, Scott!

SEE SICKNESS

As well as *Cold Fear*, there's another seaborne terror on its way to Xbox. Called *Deadlight*, I've learned this ocean-going menace is headed to our fair console some time this year. Playing as a sailor washed overboard during a storm, we'll take refuge on the SS Hyperion only to be stalked through the ship by all manner of oozing bogeys with sharp teeth.



BARGAINHUNTERX

Ralph Panebianco dives into the bargain bins on behalf of the cheapskate in all of us...

EB GAMES PRE-ORDER PROMOTION

Put down a \$10 deposit on either *Mech Assault 2: Lone Wolf*, *Splinter Cell 3: Chaos Theory* or *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic 2: The Sith Lords* at any EB Games and get a massive \$20 off the final price of the game. The offer is only for a limited time so get in quick.

AMPED 2

Publisher: Microsoft
Was: \$69.95 Now: \$49.95
Available at: Everywhere
The classic snowboarder becomes even more affordable.

CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

Publisher: Activision
Was: \$99.95 Now: \$69.96
Available at: Everywhere
WWII Action doesn't come much better than this. A bargain price for a worthy addition to your collection.

CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Was: \$99.95 Now: \$57.84
Available at: Dick Smith Electronics
This is a sleeper hit that no shooting fan should miss.



BARGAIN OF THE MONTH

BURNOUT 3 TAKEDOWN PRICE CRASH!

Publisher: EA Games
Was: \$99.95 Now: \$49.95
Available at: Everywhere
The game that re-defined the arcade racing genre hits a bargain price point. For those that don't already own it, do yourself a favour and buy this game right now. You won't be disappointed.



↑ Call of Duty: Finest Hour

animate your life!

Learn 3d graphics and animation

at Australia's most modern
technology college

- basic modelling to advanced animation
- industry standard software
- world class lecturers
- international network of colleges
- state of the art facilities
- accelerated 2 year degree program
- the only college in Australia with an
OPTICAL MOTION CAPTURE SYSTEM

CERTIFICATE - DIPLOMA - DEGREE

call SAE on **1300 855 551**

or visit **www.sae.edu**



SAE
COLLEGE

Byron Bay Perth Adelaide Brisbane Sydney Melbourne
New York Paris Amsterdam London Singapore Miami Berlin
& 30 other locations worldwide

News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

Cracked Foundation

Those Bungie boys are a good bunch of lads. If, God forbid, you have yet to complete the mighty *Halo 2* and are hankering after another multiplayer map to whip your mates at, the Foundation level is now downloadable. Once you plug into Xbox Live and fire up *Halo 2*, the game will automatically install the new level for you. We've played it and, despite being fairly small, it's a great time-waster thanks to the mounted gun turrets so close to each other. So, all you lazy bones out there, just download it, pretend you've completed the game, and Bob's your uncle, a bonus level!

Walk Of Game!

Congratulations again to Bungie and our favourite saviour of the world. This month Master Chief was inducted into the Walk Of Game, the software equivalent of Hollywood's Walk Of Fame. Master Chief will now have his own polished star on the floor of San Francisco's Metreon Centre alongside the likes of Link, Mario, and Lara Croft. Well done big guy, we're proud.

A Rich Move

Congratulations to one of the newest members of Xbox's Australian PR agency, Pulse Communications. Richie Young, formerly the editor of the Official PlayStation 2 Magazine Australia, has reportedly been snapped up by the firm to work on their portfolio, possibly including Xbox. He was heard musing, "Guess that means we'll be playing *Halo 2* a lot more," as he switched off the office PS2 for the last time. We'll be waiting for your challenge!

Stargate Opens!

WE'LL LET YOU in on a little secret. When Vanessa heard *Stargate* was coming to consoles she wet herself through giddy joy, much like many other sci-fi fans we suspect.

Stargate SG-1: The Alliance, being developed by JoWood, will feature many of the worlds from the *SG-1* and *Stargate Atlantis* TV series, plus the film starring that ladyboy from *The Crying Game*. So far only a few brief snatches of info have been released, including this shot of a snow-covered outdoor facility. Will the eye liner-wearing Teal'C be blasting through this winter wonderland? We'll let you know as soon as we get more info!



↑ The *Stargate* world. Coming soon to Xbox!

Who Let The Snoops Out?

Another hip-hop sandboxer wades into the ring...

THERE ARE going to be obvious comparisons drawn between *Fear & Respect* and that rather well-known free-roaming game, but word on da street suggests big things for this urban shooter.

The fact that *Boyz n The Hood* and *2 Fast 2 Furious* director John Singleton is attached to the project is enough to have our ears pricked, but when mention of *KOTOR* got thrown in to the mix too, we couldn't help but be intrigued. The 'fear' and 'respect' of the title refers to the way people will treat us throughout the game depending on our actions, much like *KOTOR*'s light and dark sides. The main character will be a retired OG (street for Old Gangster) so he'll know exactly how to extract both fear and respect from da hood.

Set in and around the baking summer swell of South Central LA, the story sucks our OG into a fight for survival as he must shoot and brawl his way through choices and conflicts that are forced upon his friends. What these are, Midway has yet to reveal, but they'll involve all manner of driving, shooting and swearing hi-jinks, especially as our man is a reformed crook. While he's been in the clink, his 'hood has become overrun with troubles, and this might be what we'll have to sort out.

Another interesting idea, and one that *GTA* (Issue 25, 8.9) hasn't quite managed to capture properly, is the apparent use of hand-to-hand combat. As well as multiple weapons and drive-bys, one-on-one brawls will also play a major part in the game, with respect being earned by defeating gang members of higher standing than yourself.

So enthusiastic about *Fear & Respect* is Hollywood that no sooner was the game actually announced than it got snaffled up by a studio to be developed into a film. With our guy passing a striking resemblance to Snoop Dogg, no guesses who might be lined up for a starring role. More from *Fear & Respect*, plus a juicy hands-on very soon!



↑ Ah, the US educational system - what wonderful schools they have.



↑ Who'd have thought bickers over a plastic trike would escalate so much?



↑ When in doubt, duck behind a car.



↑ Shooting up cars is fun, honestly!



↑ Someone's been in daddy's closet...

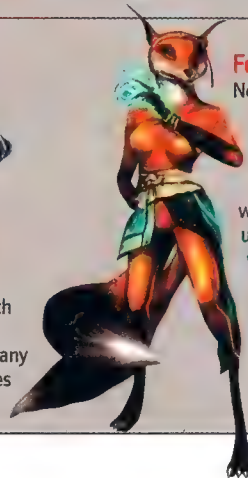
Look out for IHRA Professional Drag Racing. The American tarmac-eater could be on our shores soon!

New Beasties! Three new Jade Empire demons exclusively revealed!



Elephant Demons

Loyal and brutal when dealing with others. They protect their masters with considerable might. While many are honourable, some rogue nannies choose to raid villages instead.



Fox Spirits

Not strictly demons, but these beings are held in high regard. As cunning as, er, foxes, they are the game's teachers. If we're bad, they'll teach us the error of our ways with lessons that few will ever forget and they're also able to shapeshift. They'll offer gifts and tell riddles, but everything comes at a price.



Rat Demons

Working as labourers and thugs for higher beings, they have their uses. They can sniff out hidden treasures and human prey within their surroundings. Very easy to control.

THE **ONLY** MAGAZINE FOR **HALO 2** TIPS!

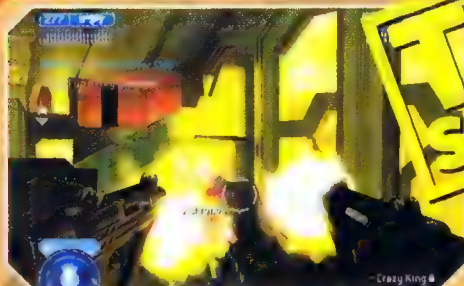


OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN
XBOX MAGAZINE

HALO 2

COMPLETE GAME GUIDE

**TIPS
SPECIAL**



COMBAT TACTICS

Full vehicle and weapon tips – devastate the enemy with our advanced strategies!



MISSION GUIDES

Unlock everything! You won't miss a thing with our comprehensive walkthrough!

**XBOX LIVE
ONLINE
SURVIVAL
GUIDE!**

■ SINGLE-PLAYER CAMPAIGN HINTS & TIPS

On sale now!

Area 51

DEVELOPER: MIDWAY PUBLISHER: MIDWAY RELEASE DATE: AUTUMN



↑ In *Area 51* the alien threat will try and infect human hosts so it's a good idea to keep an eye on your team.



↑ Throughout the game we'll have to find clues, and hopefully a cure, for the infection. This guy could help.



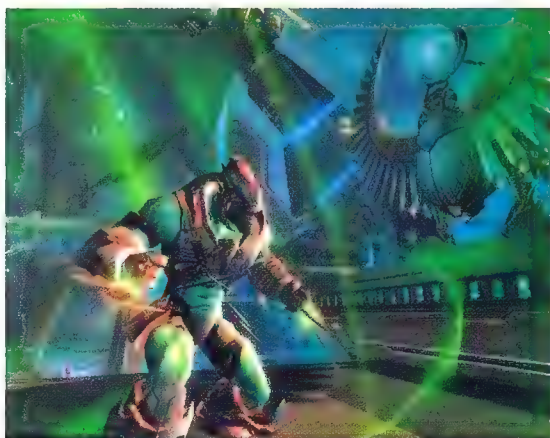
↑ As well as indirect alien threats, we'll have to deal with them head on as they try to infect everything on Earth.

Unreal Championship 2: TLC

DEV: EPIC GAMES PUB: MIDWAY RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2005



↑ Jet packs will let you swoop down behind an unsuspecting enemy for a kill. They also make for a great getaway!



↑ We recommend you learn the layouts during the ultra-rare quiet moments. It'll be invaluable.



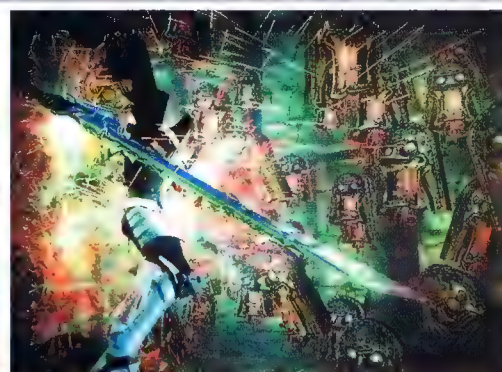
↑ We'll also have to learn which weapons suit us best. *Unreal* is too fast a game to make mistakes.

Otogi 2: Immortal Warriors

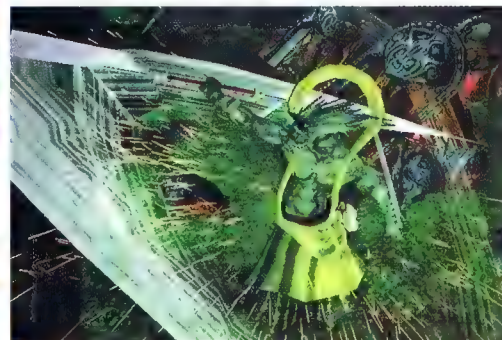
DEVELOPER: FROM SOFTWARE PUBLISHER: SEGA RELEASE DATE: FEB 2005



↑ The Otogi 2 engine has been optimised to allow for an even greater range of special particle and light effects.



↑ The new optimisation also means a broader range of intricately designed enemies and spectres.



↑ During combat, the lighting effects will come into their own. Sparks fly and light traces flash everywhere.

Close Combat: First To Fight

DEVELOPER: DESTINEER PUBLISHER: TAKE-TWO RELEASE DATE: AUT 2005



↑ During a recent playtest, we found using our squad was vital for success. Without them, this tank would shred us up.



↑ We'll have to learn to use the team for tasks such as taking down a protected enemy officer.



↑ Covering each other will take priority. If you don't work as a team, you're dead.



↑ Mmm... Jango Fett meets Qui Gon Jinn. Could this be some kind of multiplayer deathmatch mode we're not being told about?

Q&A

LEGO STAR WARS

Bring in the probe droid! Lego Star Wars development director Jonathan Smith spills his cowardly rebel guts

Dev: Giant	Pub: Eidos
Release: April 2005	Live: None
Players: 1-2	
0	Percentage Complete 80 100

Tell us how this came about. Did George Lucas have any say?

George Lucas keeps in touch with everything *Star Wars*, and we've been working very closely with the entire Lucas organisation from day one. Their enthusiasm and support for our work has been overwhelming. The origination of the game was pretty straightforward: we had a very clear concept and right at the start, everyone just 'got' it.

Is the fact this is *Star Wars* and Lego just a gimmick or are there real benefits to the game?

Ah, so you haven't seen much of the game [laughs]! Putting the soul of *Star Wars* together with the world's favourite toy has taken us into unexplored gaming territory. We've been free to take risks and create something truly fresh. And we've also been able to draw upon some of the core feelings you have about Lego - things like playfulness, surprise and creativity - as a basis for some terrific new game mechanics. Time and time again, we've found ourselves working on something new, which felt completely fun to play, which just made us smile, with all of us saying at once: "That's so Lego!"

How can *Star Wars* be 'so Lego'? Will we be able to 'Force build' bridges and walls with the bricks?

Oh yes, and that's a good example of the kind of special experience we have here. We can use The Force and combine it with Lego to create a

gameplay feature that's just great fun to play. In our *Lego Star Wars* world, The Force can do all kinds of things that you won't have seen before like building, re-building and transforming as well as moving things about. You've also got those fantastic 'Force Push' combat moves, and of course the dark side characters will have special powers of their own...

Tell us a little about the game. It spans the entire 'new' trilogy, doesn't it? Surely it's not got *Episode III* spoilers in there?

It tells the whole story of *Episode I*, *Episode II* and, yes, *Episode III*. How could we resist? We'll give you control over all the characters from the three films, as you play through all the whole story - from Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan's first encounter with the Trade Federation above the planet of Naboo, right through *Episode II* and the new movie. It's the rise and fall of Anakin Skywalker from beginning to end.

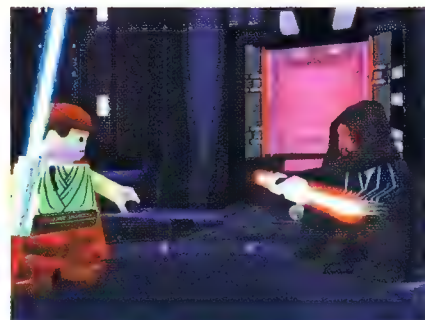
That's pretty dark, but how do you manage to create the sense of menace and dread associated with Darth Maul and co when they're just Lego?

All the core characterisation is in the animation and we've been working with a genius animator who's been able to bring all our *Lego Star Wars* characters to life with extraordinary style and presence. We also use a lot of cinematic techniques to create an emotional effect - lighting, camera choices and of course all the *Star Wars* music and sound effects. And Darth Maul's got the added advantage that, if you give him the slightest chance, he'll completely kick your ass. That tends to get him some respect.

Tell us what kind of characters we can expect to see - any unlockables? Any old-school *Star Wars* characters in there?



↑ Jonathan Smith, development director - more than just plastic.



↑ Darth Maul will be a tough cookie apparently.



↑ Padme admires her new Lego droid collection.



↑ Deflect droid fire with your plastic lightsaber!

All the characters from *Episodes I, II and III* are in the game. Jedi, droids, security guards... whatever. As you progress, you'll get to bring them all into your collection as playable characters. Even the enemy characters (controlling Jango Fett, or Darth Maul, or a Droideka is *really* cool). You can use their special abilities to access secret bonuses in the other levels. That's our unique character Free Play mode, which I think everyone's going to be blown away by. We have over 30 different playable characters. As for old skool characters - well, wait and see...

Have you had to spend hours playing with Lego characters to get the feel of the game right?

Honestly, yes. All the offices are full of Lego. And we've often been in discussions about level design or game features, where someone's reached for a character or bricks to make a point, or test something out. We tend to take pictures of them.

How many levels have you had to build then?

We have 18 levels spanning all three movies, and over 30 playable characters, each with their own special abilities and combat moves.

Tell us something no one yet knows about *Lego Star Wars*.

R2-D2 can use his probe to deactivate other droids.

Nice touch, but please tell us that when you kill a droid or character they explode like a Lego figure. Of course!

Can we expect to see any more Lego or *Star Wars* hybrid games in the future?

We've just had so much fun on this, we're full of ideas for the future.

Playboy: The Mansion

Slipping on the crushed velvet smoking jacket of lust...

Dev: Ubisoft	Pub: Ubisoft
Release: Autumn 2005	Live: None
Players: 1	
0	Percentage Complete 70 100

LET'S CUT to the chase. For all the 'Sims with Wobbly Bits' comparisons, the burning questions we have about *Playboy: The Mansion* are the obvious ones. Are we about to see fried eggs, burgers and badly packed kebabs?

Well, it seems the answer is very much a 'yes'. The fact that we managed to 'have sex on couch' with two different Bunnies within five minutes is pretty much testament to what we can expect. We're still not quite sure what the long-term appeal will be, especially considering the rufy amounts to

a few jerky lap dances and a bit of hip grinding, but in the short term it definitely has its charms.

The aim is to get Hugh Hefner from glamour-mogul wannabe to the 50th anniversary of *Playboy*, contending with photoshoots, egos, party throwing and PR along the way. It seems something of a distraction to actually have to indulge the Bunnies, especially when mags need making and scandal needs covering up, but hey, somebody's got to do it.

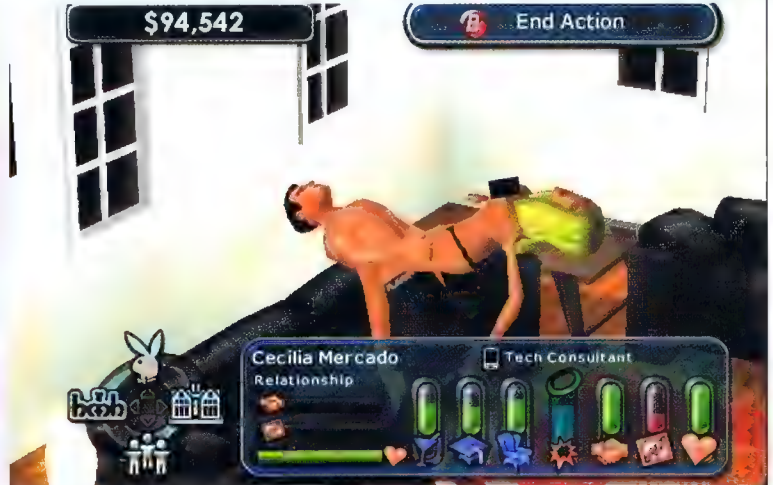
Just as in *The Sims*, there are tasks to perform, but as opposed to sitting on the throne or washing up, Ubisoft promises us tasks far more entertaining. If you count topless pool parties, voyeuristic couch-based bonking, and girl-on-girl party organisation among them, you can see why *Playboy: The Mansion* seems to be onto something of a winner. Fingers, and just about everything else, crossed.



Will the small black rectangles will be gone in the final game?



It's all very well flirting, just make sure your girlfriend isn't watching at the time.



A private moment perhaps? No - there's a party happening in the same room!

State of Emergency 2

Riot control, anarchy style

Dev: Vis	Pub: BAM!
Release: TBA 2005	Live: None
Players: 1-4	
0	Percentage Complete 80 100

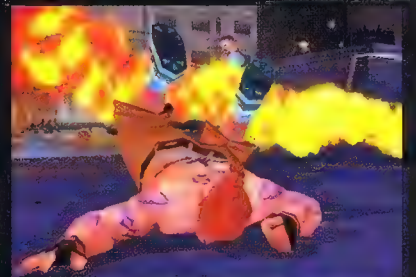
MCDONALDS, McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut! Ah yes, the mega-corporation-slammng, anarchy-fuelled rumble-a-thon is returning to Xbox. It's been quite a while since Spanky and his cohorts trashed the streets in the name of entertainment, but you just can't keep a good revolution down.

Coming soon, probably straight through your nearest shop window in fact, is *State Of Emergency 2*. Unlike the original (Issue 16, 6.0), we'll actually be able to control the rioting this time around, thanks to Spanky's improved gang control. In order to avoid *A Current Affair*-style backlashes, *State Of Emergency 2* is once again set in the fictional Capitol Plaza where an evil, obviously fictitious - ahem - government is suppressing the people. This time though, the ability to herd the riot into the best places to cause disruption is combined with the vastly increased numbers of characters on screen at once. That means we'll potentially have 500 rioters causing havoc in the streets.



Message in a bottle? We suspect if it is, it's full of swear words.

The fictional streets will, once again, be fully destructible, with entire city blocks ripe for rioting. Whole skyscrapers will be reduced to rubble thanks to the improved weapons system too. As well as mob fury (surely the most devastating weapon in here), rocket launchers, mines, grenades, Molotov cocktails, clubs, knives, various guns, and the much-loved C4 plastique will all be



Try to avoid fire, it's not usually pleasant.



Brutal handheld weapons will be there!

up for grabs. And what could be more fun than a new multiplayer option that will see hordes of us controlling our own gangs and attempting to beat the living bejesus out of every rival gang in the neighbourhood?

Prepare for some serious controversy because this is going to cause a right stink in the tabloids. Look out for the review very soon.

The Incredible Hulk

Me smash! Me wear elastic pants!

Dev: Radical	Pub: Vivendi Universal
Release: Autumn 2005	Live: None
Players: 1	
0	Percentage Complete 60 100

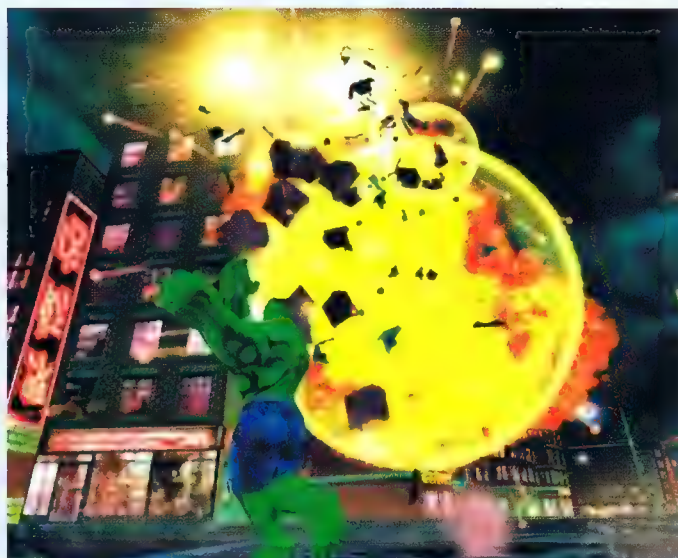
WE WERE LUCKY enough to see a sneaky glimpse of the new *Hulk* game recently, a not-so-official sequel to the rather impressive film tie-in we were playing last year (Issue 16, 74). Named, at this stage at least, *The Incredible Hulk*, the second monster melee will feature an entirely new story.

"This," the developer confidently announced as he was smashing up downtown America, "is going to be the ultimate superhero game. Forget *Spider-Man*, this is going to have it beat." And what reason do we have to disbelieve him? Hulk will be able to leap entire sandbox style levels in a few bounds.

Everything in the level will be fully destructible, and there'll be plenty of *GTA*-style treasure collecting and free-roaming to keep you busy.

Hulk will also be able to wield and create weapons from his environment. Lampposts will become giant baseball bats; we'll be able to rip cannons from tanks then slam rounds through them like a rocket launcher; and a car on each fist makes for handy boxing gloves.

Developer Radical is still hesitant about revealing too much of the plot but is well aware that we're hankering after some serious Marvel action this time around. "We've got plenty of Marvel cameos in there," we're told, "but you'll just have to wait and see to find out who they are." Our money is on an appearance by Colossus or perhaps Beast, both Hulk equals from *X-Men*. But until later in the year, we're just going to have to make do with these explosive screens. Bah!



↑ Hulk's punches will literally disintegrate tanks and vehicles on impact.



↑ When landing from a great height, shockwaves will smash cars and roads.



↑ Come on, seriously. As if a tiny pop gun like that is going to cause any damage.

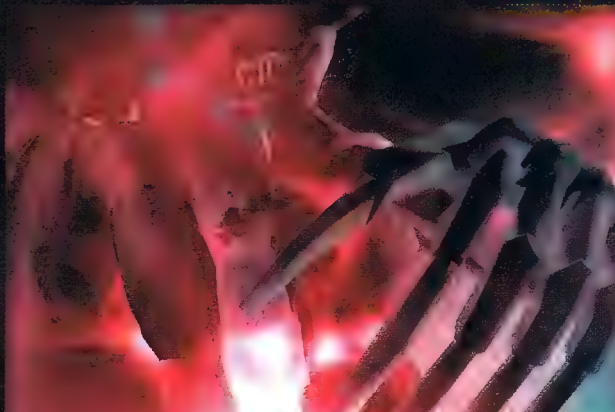
Constantine

The end of the world is nigher than we thought

Dev: Bit Studios	Pub: Sci
Release: Winter 2005	Live: None
Players: 1	
0	Percentage Complete 80 100

THOSE CLEVER DEVELOPERS. Already their beady eyes are on the blockbusters of 2005, and already we're seeing quite a bit of the Keanu Reeves-helmed *Constantine*. More news came oozing our way recently about *Constantine*'s handy True Sight powers, a key element in the game. Turns out that not only will True Sight offer us the chance to see the world as it actually is, but it will also be crucial in finding the vital demon-nailing ammo.

During missions we'll come across a variety of human NPCs. Some of these will act strangely though, especially when Constantine is in the room. With a quick flash of True Sight, it soon becomes apparent why. These humans are only of this Earth on the outside. Inside they're demons who will attempt to attack us if we were to turn our backs on them. So, with True Sight enabled, we can then keep a close check on our weaponry. One item, known as the Screech Beetle, can be

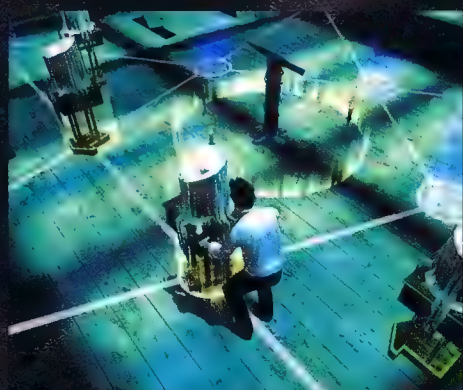


↑ Close up and personal, some of the bigger demons will be terrifying!

cast down in front of an enemy where it will then send out a piercing, paralysing scream. It can be deceptively hard to find again once cast, but with True Sight on it glows like a torch, ready to be picked up and used again... something we're going to find very handy when every minion of hell is eager to drag us back into the fiery pit.



↑ Shh! Don't say Soul Reaver... d'oh!



↑ Constantine will also solve devious puzzles.

Killer Swells

Get ready for a face full of unpleasant salty spray

COLD FEAR: could there ever be a more nauseating game? It's not so much the dismembered, blood-spattered corpses lying around the place that got to us, or the way that, seconds after riddling a zombie with gunfire, he came back at us for more (entrails dangling from his belly like a skater boy's belt chain). No, it's down to *Cold Fear's* unnervingly realistic sea-based motion. So faithful is the rocking and rolling of *Cold Fear's* shipboard camera that even Captain Birdseye would feel green around the gills playing it. "We showed the game at a press event in Paris recently," said producer Matthieu Boulard. "When I left I shared a taxi with one of the journalists, who was sick over me."

Here's the plot cocktail: take one part oilrig-based secret scientific research lab; add a twist of evil genetic manipulation stuff; mix in an escaped batch of hideous mutant zombie things and set it all onboard an abandoned Russian whale trawler, left floating adrift in the middle of the choppy Bering Sea. Send in US Coastal Guard Tom Hansen to brave the storm and investigate, together with an *X-Files*-inspired conspiracy plot and gameplay that favours gun-toting action, and you've got yourself a genuine slice of horror-based naughtiness. *Cold Fear* might seem familiar on the surface but slow, dull, boring *Resident Evil* this most definitely is not.

What's exciting about *Cold Fear*, apart from the amazing way the camera recreates the swell of the waves around you, is the way it encourages you to

be creative during combat. Ammo is scarce so improvisation is a must. Whether that's catching the enemy out by shooting some nearby explosive gas canisters or waiting for a passing wave to sweep them off the deck, every room in the game promises a unique way of dispatching the zombie horde.

When asked to sum *Cold Fear* up in a sentence, Boulard replied, "We've got all these cool elements; action, ambience, a great story and a really unique identity. I'm really excited about it." In a way, he's right, but since that was two sentences he's clearly cheating, so let us sum it up instead: "*Cold Fear* is so scary it'll have you sweating like a fat bird at her sister's wedding." Now if that's not terrifying enough to give you nightmares, we don't know what is.



↑ Undead crew will be after your duty free.



↑ The camera will rock as you play the game so hold on tight to anything!



↑ Tsk! The service on Manly ferries these days! I dunno...!

News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

Oval Balls!

After something of a break for rugby league titles on Xbox with the release of Sidhe Interactive's *NRL*, Electronic Arts announced this month that it would be bringing back its *Rugby* series, with the release of *Rugby 2005*. Feeding, perhaps, still on the pride that briefly gripped the rugby playing world during the Rugby World Cup 2004, the series will be with us again, and our latest release schedules suggest it could be as soon as March this year. We'll have more news very soon.

Buckle Up

We saw some strange, strange artwork recently for the forthcoming racer, *Automaniacs*. From what we can gather so far, this is a racing game for Westie bogans - a fish 'n' chips take on what it means to be a boy racer. Not only will we get to drive around banged-out bogan cars but we will be able to take passengers too. It even looks as though we'll be able to have a mate in the passenger seat and a pitbull in the back. And no, we're not joking, it actually looks to be happening.

Two's New

Looks like Namco is up to some big time development, quite possibly for Xbox 2. The company has recently registered the names *Shogun Warrior*, *The Lost Enemy* and *Star Bandits* as game names. It's uncertain what either title entails at the moment, but we're almost willing to put money on them being the usual blend of Namco Japanese gaming madness.

Mud-chewing Rednecks!

FUEL THE GREAT American Midwest, a serene wildness where you'll hear nothing but the roar of 4x4s and the screeching of wildlife. *Fuel* is headed our way and promises to provide the heady mix of environmental damage and fast-as-you-like racing we've all come to love.

Set over various terrains, *Fuel* is a true outdoor sports nut's wet dream, combining everything from jet skis to quads to whet our appetites. We'll also have to pick our characters before we race. A fat guy is great for keeping a vehicle grounded, but will he affect the speed? Then there are going to be characters who can't swim - not the best candidates for the jet ski races, then. We'll have more news soon.



↑ Is this the *Tony Hawk's* of offroading?



↑ Stun grenades can actually knock pilots out, and we all know what that leads to.



↑ Hanging with the boys down at Balacava's Brasserie.



↑ The UN. Help 'em out or screw 'em over, it's up to you.

Mercenaries

If you can see it, you can destroy it...

Dev: Pandemic	Pub: LucasArts
Release: Feb 2005	Live: None
Players: 1	
Q	Percentage Complete: 80 100

WE KNOW WHAT you're thinking because we thought it too. This is a GTA wannabe set in the army, only it can't possibly be as good as GTA because, well, GTA is GTA. Only that's where *Mercenaries* differs from other sandbox contenders, because it is just as good as you'd imagine and quite possibly a little better too. Come February, LucasArts' war game will be unleashed and, from what we've played, it's shaping up to be every bit as good as we were hoping.

Set in the DMZ (De-Militarised Zone) between North and South Korea, three Mercenaries are out to make a buck from the volatile situation between the two countries. How they do it and who they work for is entirely up to them, just as long as the coffers are filled and the contracts keep rolling in. Whether the Russian Mafia want your services to 'deal' with a rogue general, or the UN need you to neutralise a South Korean bunker, the option to take or leave a contract is entirely up to you.

There are over 140 missions, but if you'd prefer to trundle around in a tank squishing everything with a backbone then the option is there. Choppers, ATVs, jeeps and the occasional nuclear warhead carrier are there for the taking from the outset, so the only vehicles you end up unlocking tend to be bigger and better. And these babies will do far more than just provide getaways. Every man-made structure, be it a humble water tower or a colossal cloudbusting military headquarters, can be utterly destroyed. With homing missiles, C4, bunker busters, carpet bombs and cache upon cache of



↑ Dump your catch on the chopper for cash.

explosives at your fingertips, you'll be remodelling landscapes like a demented demolition ball.

The physics are shaping up to be exquisite too, with bodies tumbling from buildings, burning wreckage, dust particles sweeping over landscapes, and C4-packed Skodas launching into space in an inferno of smoke and flame.



↑ Anything you see can be destroyed. Apart from trees apparently.

At the moment we would say the mission structure needs to be refined a little because the quests that were open to us seemed too similar. But hey, when they involve assassinations, sabotage, and sending bunker busters via infrared markers into the HQ of a Mafioso, we can't grumble too much. Review next issue.

Now you see it... The subtle art of removing pesky enemy buildings



↑ This ancient Korean monument looks too valuable to blow up. Do it anyway.

↑ Plant the C4 while avoiding a few suspicious troops, then head back to your safe zone.

↑ Press the red button on the remote and watch the whole thing come crashing down.

↑ When the dust clears, the monument has disappeared. Right, what building's next...?

Oddworld Stranger's Wrath

Prepare to get off your horse and drink your SoulStorm Brew

Dev: Oddworld	Pub: EA
Release: March 05	Live: None
Players: 1	
Percentage Complete: 80	100

IF THE GAMING world is currently in the dark about the specific function of a Thudslug or just how quickly a Bolamite can cocoon a varmint, it soon won't be. Trust us, the Fuzzle will soon sit its fuzzy butt down alongside such well recognised weapons as the BFG and Covenant Carbine.

Oddworld Stranger's Wrath, is shaping up to be more than just a return to form following the only slightly less than amazing *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee* (Issue 01, 8.1). A Wild West of Oddworld proportions, with all the deliciously dark screwball antics you'd expect of Abe, *Stranger's Wrath* is Oddworld's first foray into the world of first-person shooters. This is no normal shooter though. The mysterious Stranger is only ever armed with a crossbow, but the ammo he loads into it varies wildly, from the decoy 'Chippunk' which attracts enemies to it (and hopefully to their death in the process), or the Boombat - Mother Nature's answer to the grenade launcher. Nasty.

Ammo is sourced from plucking critters from their cobwebs (the Bolamites) or knocking them out of the sky (Boombats) with the handy Zappfly. Too much Darwin? Don't worry, *Stranger's Wrath* is shaping up to be such an epic, swooping tale of Oddness we couldn't help but be sucked in. You won't be able to resist either.

During a recent hands-on it became apparent that *Stranger's Wrath* will again contain the usual Oddworld twists and turns, with us discovering very early on in the game that something isn't quite as it seems. Stranger is only a bounty hunter

through necessity because something about him isn't quite right. He needs an operation and is saving up to pay for it. What it's for is still a mystery - one we'll only discover come release - but we've got a feeling there are greater things planned for Stranger's destiny than he realises.

Under the hood, *Stranger's Wrath* can boast some pretty remarkable AI. Although final tweaks and touches are still being implemented before release, this is pretty much finalised. If a bad guy can't get you on his own, not only will he call for help but he'll try and flank you or start rummaging through long grass if you've taken refuge in it. Just because *Oddworld* has gone first-person doesn't mean it looks as though it's going to be any more forgiving than previous games. There will still be the matter of out-smarting the enemy, there's still the very real chance of getting killed and mutilated in very nasty ways by bizarre creatures, and there looks to be another twisted story to once again get our teeth into. Look out for our full review of this odd little shooter next issue.



↑ Zap your enemies with the Zappfly. When zapped, wrap 'em up!



↑ Cover enemies in Fuzzles and they'll be eaten alive!



↑ A well-placed shot will have enemies dying everywhere!

ODD GETS EVEN Know your enemy!



The main boss for each level. His grunts will track you down and he's often the last man standing.

A well-placed Boombat and it's all over for your enemy. Ragdoll physics kick in here too.

Destructible barrels. If an enemy is standing close, these are great for disposing of them.

Like previous *Oddworld* games, stealth plays a part. Get spotted and the enemy will get you.

Left trigger weapon. This Boombat caused the carnage. Want another critter? Swap 'em!

Right trigger weapon - the Zappfly. Charge him up and let him fly. If he gets tired, switch him!



↑ Don't let them get too close or else!



↑ This guy is hard, so attack him from afar.



Latest DVD, Cinema, On-line and Music edited by James Cottee

P038 X-DVD

Travel around the world in 80 days... with Jackie Chan

P039 X-CINEMA

Jude Law saves the world in this CG extravaganza

P039 X-TOYS

That headset is a sight for sore eyes

P040 PHOTOSHOP PHUNNIES

Got funny images from the web? Send them to us!

P040 X-WEB

Wacky places to visit in the online world

P041 X-ANIME

You will bow before the fist! OBEY THE FIST!

X-DVD



AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

RRP \$34.95 RATING PG

STEAM BOY THIS ain't. The 2004 version of *Around The World In 80 Days* is an apt microcosm of the wonders and perils that today's Hollywood sensibilities bring to the medium: high budgets and technical mastery on the one side, and stale directing, cheap shots and a dearth of believability on the other. The high-brow gentleman's wager

of Phileas Fogg is the premise, but is swiftly overshadowed by the comedy stylings of Passepartout (Jackie Chan). Plagued by kung-fu assassins and intrusive celebrity cameos, this falls far short of the intensity of Jules Verne's original vision, becoming less than the sum of its parts.

A relic from the dawn of science fiction,

it still works in the fashion of all latter-day Jackie Chan flicks: the goofy exposition is an excuse to string together some well-choreographed fight sequences.

Anachronistic in feel, if not overall presentation, great liberties have been taken to cram in a perceived quota of referential jokes for any supervising adult viewers.

Fogg's fantabulous contraptions come off as poor riffs on Da Vinci, breaking more laws of modern physics than you could get away with in a typical Bugs Bunny cartoon. With a handful of extra features on the disc, this is one to rent, not buy, save for any of the Chan completists out there, or the Hollywood apologist.



YES PRIME MINISTER: SERIES ONE

RRP \$29.95 RATING PG

THE CLASSIC COMEDY misadventures of Jim Hacker, the progressive polliwog who each episode matches his feeble wits with the utterly corrupt civil servant Sir Humphrey. This disc includes all eight episodes of the first season of Hacker's hypothetical term as PM of the UK. While some of the cold war story angles have

dated, the humour has not, with the late great Nigel Hawthorne delivering some of the longest, most incomprehensible sentences in TV history. In some ways, this series was eerily prophetic, with the worst fears of the Euro-skeptics exceeded on every front. A shame the disc is a flipper, though.

RODAN

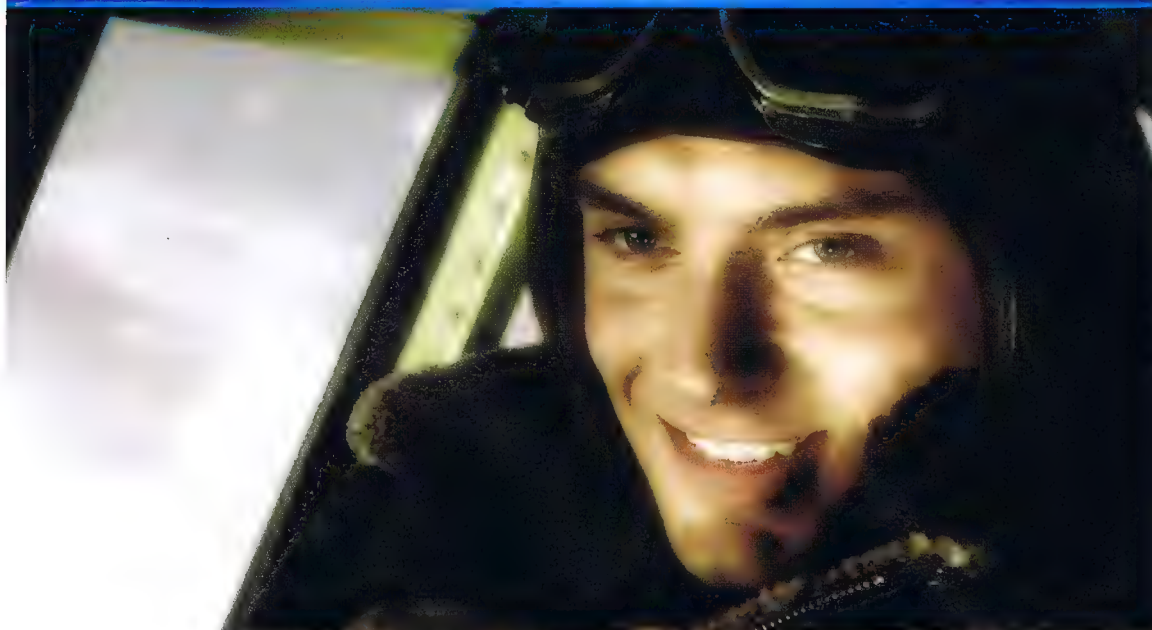
RRP \$19.95 RATING PG

ATTENTION ALL ARMCHAIR psychiatrists: here's a prime opportunity to dissect the mental health of post-war Japan, as expressed in one of the many monster movies to emerge from the volcanic archipelago. Note the pride in their ordered, productive society, yet the pure terror brought by an unstoppable,

merciless alien force: the giant supersonic pterodactyl "Rodan." This monstrosity is clearly a sublimation of a primal fear of the US Air Force, as engrained by the war that knocked their country flat. Get ready for hilarious melodrama as intricate models of cityscapes are wrecked by men in rubber suits.



X-CINEMA



↑ "The name's Dare. Dan Dare. I beat up aliens for Queen and Country."

SKY CAPTAIN & THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

George Lucas doesn't have a monopoly on cheesy CG effects

THIS IS RETRO-FUTURISM taken to an absurd extreme. Jude Law is Sky Captain, an airborne mercenary-for-hire in an alternate history 1930s. In his propeller-era fighter plane he dashes about the world fighting the forces of evil, which in this case is a mysterious army of giant robots. While the film noir era gender conflict seems intentionally out of place, that's nothing compared to the visuals. The entire film is rendered in a bleached, washed-out style, with almost all the backgrounds and sets airbrushed in with digital magic. It's a great idea, but handled so repetitively as to be disorientating, almost headache-inducing.

The thin veneer of believability follows our hero and his dippy journalist offside around the globe, as increasingly implausible feats of super-science only just barely manage to suspend disbelief. We shan't spoil the preposterous visage of Angelina Jolie's aircraft carrier, but let's just say that by the time her squadron of submersible fighter jets are fighting the octopus robots the logic centres of your brain will be too exhausted to care. It's a real shame, as intermittently there are hints to what this science-fantasy romp could have been. Let us cross our fingers and hope that *Star Wars III* has some grounding in reality to keep our attention.

X-TOYS

PLANTRONICS GAMECOM HALO 2 EDITION

RRP \$99.95

WELL, THIS is it - the *Halo 2* headset that everyone's been asking about. It's a pliable little unit that's designed to fit very comfortably, but the joints are loose enough for it to come flying off your ear with any sudden head movements. But who can resist a headset that's colour-matched with *Halo*?



MORDAUNT-SHORT GENIE

RRP \$2,799

THIS SURROUND SOUND UNIT isn't cheap, but it's got the goods when it comes to solid 5.1 channel sound performance. The satellites feature a gorgeous aluminium surface and produce crisp and detailed sound to match.

X-AUDIO

COURTESY OF SHOCK RECORDS



ROBOTS IN DISGUISE GET RID

THEY LOOK LIKE exemplars of the squeaky J-Pop aesthetic, but this dynamic duo is less damsel, more Deception. Razor sharp electro sounds render upbeat lyrics with a fresh, engaging vibe. The scribbled, school-folder theme pervades the entire disc - it's not often you hear songs about "Girl Germs."



ATMOSPHERE SEVEN'S TRAVELS

THAT'S FUNNY, I thought De La Soul was dead. Whimsical audio trappings invade the edges of this curious fusion of hip-hop influences. Everything from 50s lounge to 90s grunge supplements the well-enunciated, if not always well-conceived lyrical package. It's kind of tribal and hypnotic regardless; as heard repeatedly on Triple J.



VARIOUS ARTISTS HOMELAND

JET. GRINSPON. The Spazzys. Nick Cave. What do they all have in common? They're all Australian, and they're all lending their support to this double-disc fund-raiser effort for our asylum-seeker chums. Content varies greatly in style, if not quality; still, this is a great chance to prove how left-wing and sensitive you are.



HAYSEED DIXIE LET THERE BE ROCKGRASS

WEIRD AL YANKOVIC has got nothing on these guys. From the deepest recesses of the Appalachian mountains, these switched-on southerners deliver high-speed hillbilly renditions of rock classics. Tracks like Fat Bottom Girls, I Believe in a Thing Called Love, and Highway to Hell have never sounded this good.

X-WEB



APPLESEED: THE MOVIE

www.appleseedthemovie.com

THE NAME "MASAMUNE SHIROW" should mean something to old-school anime fans. He created *Ghost in the Shell* and *Dominion: Tank Police*, which were both successfully translated into the world of anime. His sci-fi epic *Appleseed* was also turned into an anime movie years ago - it sucked. There's a new version due out this year, and it looks to be a massive improvement. Set in a 22nd Century city of clones and cyborgs, it's a fusion of counter-terrorism and allusions to Greek mythology that coalesces into a miasma of ultra-tech charged violence. Could be worth a watch - check out the trailer.



THE URBZ COMIX

urbzsims.ea.com/comix/

SURE, THE GAME may be a little... derivative. Not exactly the grand vision of civil engineering and anthropology that Will Wright devised all those years ago. But the Urbz do have their own goofy charm, that of swinging young adults not ready for the brain-dead coma of the suburbs. The hopes and dreams of these imaginary characters have been translated into comic form, viewable for free online. What's more, these adventures have been drawn by some of the biggest names in underground comic books, like Chynna Clugston (Blue Monday) and Evan Dorkin (Milk & Cheese). Good for a laugh, and value at the price.



CHANNEL 101

www.channel101.com

COMMUNITY ACCESS TV has brought us some odd gems over the years... Mega 64, ZTS, and now Channel 101. This online, virtual "film festival" uses a user voting system to ensure not only the finest in quality control, but that the audience (you) need never get bored. Shows are scrapped or continued on a whim, ensuring the lively instant editing of improvisational comedy keeps the format from getting stale. Devised by Rob Schrab and Dan Harmon, creators of "Scud: The Disposable Assassin" and "Heat Vision & Jack." Look out for mega-star Jack Black as a human/PC hybrid in Computerman - only a download away!

X-PHOTOSHOP PHUNNIES

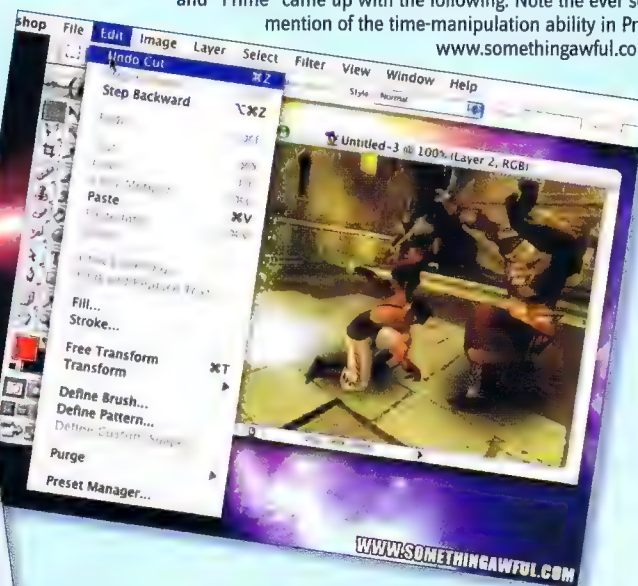
PSP BATTERY LIFE

IN THEORY, THE Sony PSP offers up to 5 hours of battery life. In theory. In reality, all kinds of user actions can accelerate power drain, like having the backlit screen turned on, using wi-fi, turning the volume up high, or reading from the disc drive. In practice, battery life could be as little as two (2) hours. There will, of course, be interchangeable battery units available, and who knows... third party manufacturers might start flogging units that give PSP owners a more comfortable window of gaming opportunity. These battery packs may limit their gaming comfort in other ways, however... It's not a subtle picture, but then it's hardly a subtle issue - that trendy electro-necktie could just as easily become a cyber-noose. www.ukresistance.co.uk



UNDO CUT

PHOTOSHOP IS THE Rolls Royce of image manipulation software. It has the most features, the most prestige, and is by far the most expensive program in its class. It has so many features that simply coming to grips with the program is a full time job, as can be easily attested by OXM's loyal art director/vassal Paul. A recent photo-manipulation contest over at Somethingawful.com challenged forum-goers to devise amusing plays on words based on common actions in the Photoshop toolchest, and "Prime" came up with the following. Note the ever so subtle mention of the time-manipulation ability in Prince of Persia. www.somethingawful.com



EVERY MONTH, WE scour cyberspace for the latest in photo-manipulated videogame humour. If you find a picture worthy of *Photoshop Phunnies*, or better yet, if you've made one yourself, send it to us at staff@oxm.com.au with the subject "Photoshop Phunnies", and you could see your name featured in Australia's *Official Xbox Magazine*!

X-ANIME



NEW FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

RRP \$29.95 RATING MA15+

FOR WHAT IT'S worth, *Fist of the North Star* is one of the classic golden-age titles that helped put the anime industry on the map in Australia. The first trickle of VHS releases over a decade ago emphasised pure violence and exploitation, and critics quite rightly referred to the original movie as "An epic assault on the senses." This new series

revisits the basic concept, updating it with bold, if garish, 3D computer effects. The setting is the same: post-apocalyptic Earth. So is the premise: a super martial artist prowls the desert, punching villains in the face until their heads explode. It's part *Mad Max*, part Bruce Lee, and part *Legend of the Overfiend*.

Kenshiro, the gruff, buff hero of the piece, stumbles across a feudal fiefdom where the populous is kept under the heel of a vicious cult. He's a man of few words, so it's left to secondary characters to express hopes and dreams, relay exposition, and suffer in order to give some contrast to the indestructible, unflappable protagonist. It's not exactly high

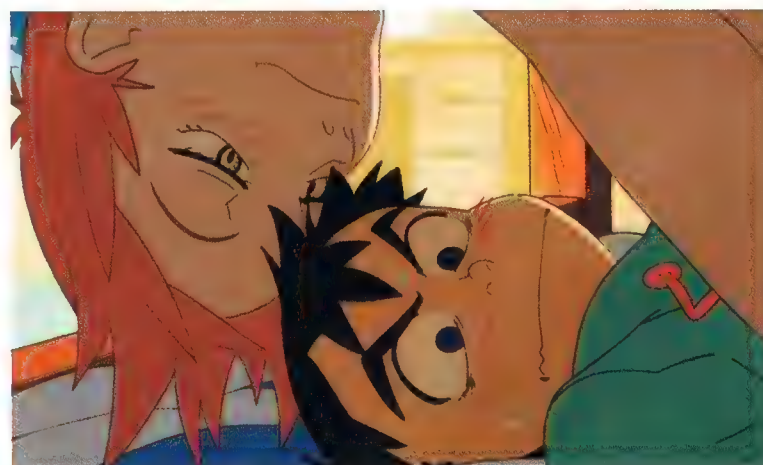
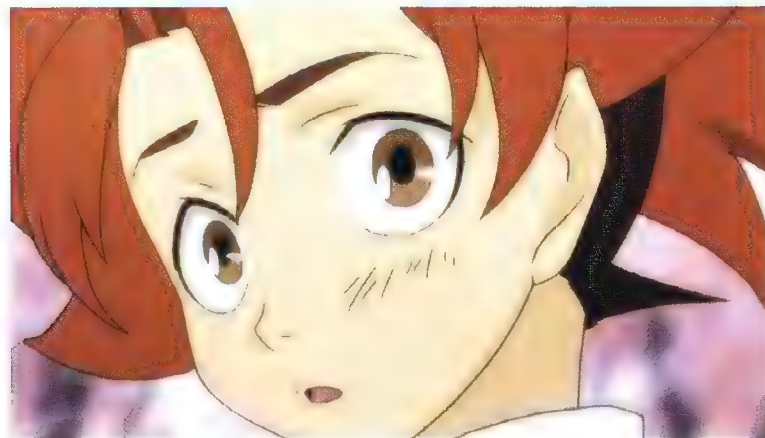
art by any standard, but the body count is quite enormous, and the preposterous dialogue is delivered with the deadpan certainty you expect from unashamed two-dimensional B-movie fare. A handful of behind-the-scenes features on the disc complement the patently absurd yet strangely compelling action.

PEACEMAKER

RRP \$29.95 RATING M15+

THIS SAMURAI ACTION show is set around ten years before the popular *Rurouni Kenshin* series, in a time of tumultuous civil unrest in 19th century Japan. It follows an impetuous teenager who joins a militia with the stated intent of avenging the murder of his parents. What he finds is an affable cabal of

martial artists who appear to have quite literally done some sort of deal with the devil to give them supernatural sword-fighting abilities. Naturally, our hero wants in on the deal... While modern and juvenile in its presentation, this otherwise blokey show seems to focus a fair bit on cross-dressing and homosexuality.



FLCL: THE COLLECTION

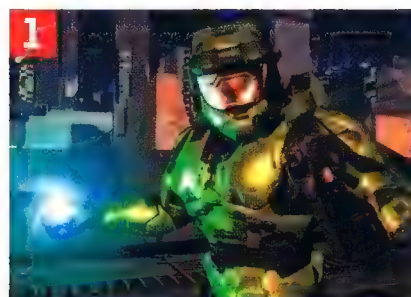
RRP \$59.95 RATING M15+

FOOLY COOLY, OR FLCL for short, is a show that evokes strong opinions. Many fans take one look at the intricate character designs, swish animation and explosive combination of art styles and fall in love straight away. Others get one whiff of the highly referential, unashamedly parochial and impossibly

dense show and their brains lock up, unable to absorb it at all. Either way, it bears repeated viewing, and this deluxe box set is an excellent tool to that end. This edition includes fact-packed supplementary booklets and commentary tracks to aid in the deciphering process. Striking, sultry and strange.

Charts

The best-selling games in the Australia



HALO 2

Dev: **Bungie**
Pub: **Microsoft**
The mighty Master Chief holds on to the top spot like his life depends on it. The awesome *Halo 2* still heads up the Xbox chart after seeing off the onslaught of EA's Christmas games.



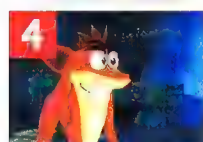
NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Dev: **EA** Pub: **EA**
If you get goosebumps when the base pumps, chances are you're already playing the second *NFS Underground* title.



FABLE

Dev: **Lionhead** Pub: **Microsoft**
The never-ending story continues to draw in new audiences as it clings onto an impressive third place. All that development time has paid off.



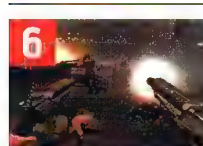
CRASH TWINSANITY

Dev: **Travellers Tales** Pub: **Vivendi Universal**
That rascally bandicoot has always been a favourite with platform gamers, and he makes his way up from the seventh spot.



SPYRO: A HERO'S TAIL

Dev: **Eurocom** Pub: **Vivendi Universal**
Just behind the crafty old Coot is Vivendi's other bread-winning mascot, the purple fire-breathing dragon whose name is pronounced "Spy-roe".



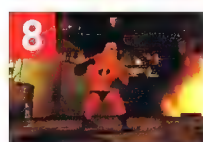
GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

Dev: **EA** Pub: **EA**
It's not a patch on the N64 original - as we said - but it's still a pretty good blaster in its own right. Fine. Don't listen to us then...



OUTRUN 2

Dev: **AM2 / Sumo** Pub: **Sega**
Sega's fast cars and fast girls still pull the punters in. Unsure? Check out our exclusive playable Live demo back in Issue 34.



THE INCREDIBLES

Dev: **Heavy Iron** Pub: **THQ**
Not a patch on the excellent movie, but this tie-in action game is still a great pick for the weekend, especially for the littlies.



V8 SUPERCARS 2

Dev: **Codemasters** Pub: **Codemasters**
It ducked out of the charts for a month, but the Christmas spending splurge has sent it back up to the toppers list.

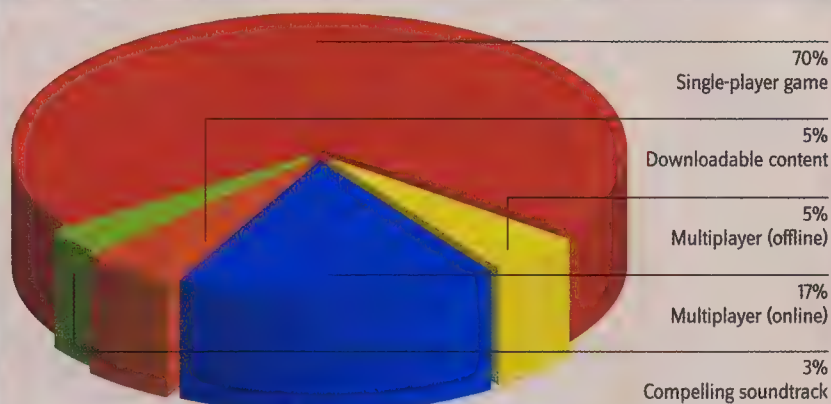


PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

Dev: **Ubisoft** Pub: **Ubisoft**
It faced stiff competition over the holiday season, but the Prince's gritty new sequel managed to find a place on the chart.

The hot topic You answer the burning question...

What features are you most interested in when looking to buy a new game?



We've all got our own favourite elements of games, whether it's a single-player game that tells a great story or multiplayer options that make your sleep patterns change. Us? We like a great single-player game with quality multiplayer options and downloadable content. Not too much to ask, is it?

TO VOTE ON a hot topic, visit the OXM forum at www.derwenthoward.com.au and post in any of the polls that have been started in the threads in there.

Your most wanted



THIS CHART IS composed entirely from the entries you send in and shows the upcoming games you're most excited by. We can then fill the mag with the news, previews and features you most want to see!



↑ TO VOTE FOR your favourite upcoming game, email us at staff@oxm.com.au with subject line 'Most Wanted', or make a post about it in our forums!

← Looks like you've all given into your anger after reading last month's world-exclusive review. *Star Wars KOTOR II* is now your most wanted game.

1	STAR WARS KOTOR II: THE SITH LORDS Dev: Obsidian Entertainment Pub: LucasArts Release: February 2005
2	DOOM 3 Dev: Vicarious Visions/id Pub: Activision Release: March 2005
3	SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY Dev: Ubisoft Montreal Pub: Ubisoft Release: March 2005
4	HALF-LIFE 2 Dev: Valve Software Pub: Vivendi Universal Release: TBA 2005
5	FORZA MOTORSPORT Dev: Microsoft Pub: Microsoft Release: April 2005
6	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2: THE LIANDRI CONFLICT Dev: Epic Games Pub: Midway Release: March 2005
7	STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO Dev: LucasArts Pub: LucasArts Release: March 2005
8	PARIAH Dev: Digital Extremes Pub: Hip Games Release: Autumn 2005
9	BROTHERS IN ARMS Dev: Gearbox Software Pub: Ubisoft Release: March 2005
10	JADE EMPIRE Dev: BioWare Pub: Microsoft Release: Feb 2005

OUR SHOUT



After giving the world *Unreal Championship*, the US studio heads in a new direction with an original shooter that looks da bomb. Much more next issue!

Xbox Game Releases

The forthcoming games you need to know about

DATE	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	THE WISH LIST	DATE	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	
Summer 04	Miami Vice	Davilex games	TBA	N/A			NBA Street V3	NuFX	EA	N/A	
	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2	Konami	Konami	31				Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath	Oddworld In.	EA	32
	Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged	Artech	Atari	25				Painkiller	Dreamcatcher	Mindscape	N/A
Autumn 05	25 To Life	Avalanche	Eidos	N/A				Psychonauts	Double Fine	Microsoft	6
	Advent Rising	Majesco	Vivendi Univ.	20				Rogue Trooper	SCI	SCI	34
	Area 51	Midway	Midway	29				Sid Meier's Pirates!	Furaxis	Atari	34
	Close Combat: First to Fight	Destineer	Take-Two	31				Sniper Elite	Rebellion	TBA	12
	Commandos Strike Force	Pyro	Eidos	36				SNK Vs. Capcom Chaos	SNK Playmore	SNK Playmore	N/A
	Conker: Live & Reloaded	Rare	Microsoft	31				Spikeout: Battle Street	Sega	Sega	36
	Conspiracy: Weapons of Mass Destruction	Kuju	Oxygen Int.	N/A				Star Wars Episode III	LucasArts	LucasArts	N/A
	CT Special Forces: Fire For Effect	Light & Shadow Pr.	Hip Interactive	N/A			Stolen	Hip Interactive	TBA	33	
	Dead or Alive Ultimate	Tecmo	Microsoft	31				The Bard's Tale	InXile	TBA	23
	Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	TBA	Novalogic	30				The Incredible Hulk	Radical	Vivendi Univ.	N/A
	Destroy All Humans	Pandemic	THQ	33				The Movies	Lionhead	Activision	16
	Doom 3	id Software	Activision	30				The Roots	Cenega	Cenega	29
	FIFA Street	EA BIG	EA	36				Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	Ubisoft Montreal	Ubisoft	37
	Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone	Stormfront	Atari	34			Spring 05	Tork	Tiwak	Ubisoft	4
	Forza Motorsport	Microsoft	Microsoft	31			Winter 05	WWE Wrestlemania 21	THQ	TBA	N/A
	Get On Da Mic	Eidos	Eidos	N/A				Fear & Respect	Midway	Midway	38
	Gungriffon	Kama	Tecmo	N/A				American McGee's Oz	Carbon6	TBA	27
	Iron Phoenix	Sammy	Sammy	N/A			Armada 2	TBA	Metro	4	
	Jade Empire	BioWare	Microsoft	31			Big Mutha Truckers 2	Empire	Empire	N/A	
	King Arthur	Konami	Konami	N/A			BloodRayne 2	Majesco	TBA	N/A	
	King of Fighters 2003/2004	SNK	TBA	N/A			Breed	Brat Designs	CDV	N/A	
	Lego Star Wars	Giant	Eidos	38			Chronos	Saber 3D	TBA	N/A	
	Medal of Honor: Dogs of War	EA	EA	N/A			Dead or Alive 4: Code Cronus	Tecmo	Microsoft	N/A	
	Mercenaries	Pandemic	LucasArts	28			Dealer	Nagual	TBA	N/A	
	Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Take-Two	Take-Two	N/A			Duality	Trilobyte Gr.	Phantagram	4	
	NARC	Midway	Midway	28			Fuel	Firetoad Software	Dreamcatcher	N/A	
	Otogi 2	From Soft.	Sega	N/A			FX Racing	Milestone	TBA	23	
	Pariah	Digital Ext.	Hip Interactive	34			Goblin Commander 2	Jaleco	Jaleco	N/A	
	Playboy: The Mansion	Arush	Ubisoft	33			Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	Rockstar North	Rockstar	N/A	
	Predator: Concrete Jungle	Eurocom	Vivendi Univ.	32			Johnny Whatever	Warthog	TBA	N/A	
	Project Zero 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	Tecmo	N/A			Kameo: Elements of Power	Rare	Microsoft	33	
	Pure Pinball	Iridon	Iridon	33			Karaoke Revolution 3	Konami	Harmonix	N/A	
	Red Ninja: End of Honour	Tranji	Vivendi Univ.	33			King Kong	Ubisoft Montreal	Ubisoft	36	
	Rugby 2005	EA	EA	38			Loose Cannon	Digital Anvil	Ubisoft	4	
	Scarface	Radical Games	Vivendi Univ.	34			Magatama	Microsoft	Microsoft	23	
	Snowblind	Crystal Dyn.	Eidos	31			Masters of the Universe	Savage	TDK	N/A	
	Sonic Mega Collection Plus	Sega	Sega	36			Neverend	Mayhem	TBA	N/A	
	Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	Ubisoft	Ubisoft	32			Nightmare Creatures 3	UbiSoft	Ubisoft	N/A	
	Star Wars KOTOR II: The Sith Lords	Obsidian	LucasArts	37			Notorious: Die to Drive	Ubisoft	Ubisoft	N/A	
	Star Wars: Republic Commando	LucasArts	EA	34			Perfect Dark Zero	Rare	Microsoft	10	
	Starcraft: Ghost	Blizzard	Vivendi Univ.	23			Phantom Dust	Microsoft	Microsoft	23	
	The Punisher	Volition	THQ	32			Pilot Down	Wide Games	Wanadoo	N/A	
	TimeSplitters Future Perfect	Free Radical	EA	33			Phoenix	Bungie	Microsoft	37	
	Torque	Garage Games	JoWood	N/A			Resident Evil 4	Capcom	Capcom	7	
	World Racing 2	TDK	TDK	N/A			Roll Call	TBA	SCI	35	
Winter 05	100 Bullets	TBA	TBA	32			Quake IV	Raven Soft.	Activision	N/A	
	ATV Quad Power Racing 3	Climax	TBA	N/A			Serious Sam 2	Croteam	Take-Two	21	
	Batman Begins	Eurocom	EA	37			Starship Troopers	Empire	Empire	27	
	Battlefield: Modern Conflict	EA	EA	N/A			Starsky & Hutch 2	Empire	Empire	N/A	
	Battlestations: Midway	Mithis	SCI	34			Star Wars Battlefront 2	Pandemic	LucasArts	36	
	Call of Cthulhu	TBA	Headfirst	32			State of Emergency 2	VIS	BAM!	N/A	
	Cold Fear	Ubisoft	Ubisoft	N/A			Street Racing Syndicate	Eutechnyx	Namco	N/A	
	Cold Winter	Swordfish Stu.	Vivendi Univ.	N/A			Stubbs the Zombie Rebel Without a Pulse	Wideload Games	Microsoft	37	
	Constantine	Bits Studios	SCI	35			Super Monkey Ball Deluxe	Sega	Sega	34	
	Dancing Stage Fusion	Konami	Konami	N/A			Survivor	Replay Studios	TBA	36	
	Darkwatch	Sammy	Sammy	N/A			Syberia 2	Microids	TBA	N/A	
	Dead to Rights 2: Hell to Pay	Namco	Namco	36			The Fast and the Furious	Genki	Vivendi Univ.	N/A	
	Emergency Mayhem	TBA	TBA	30			The Last Job	TBA	TBA	N/A	
	Fahrenheit	Quantic Dream	Vivendi Univ.	18			The Red Star	Chris. Gossetti	TBA	32	
	Freedom Fighters 2	IO Interactive	EA	N/A			True Crime 2	Luxoflux	Activision	N/A	
	Half-Life 2	Valve	Vivendi Univ.	32			War Devil	Sammy	TBA	N/A	
	Hitman: Blood Money	IO Interactive	Eidos	37			X2: The Return	Egosoft	Deep Silver	37	
	Justice League	Trav. Tales	Midway	N/A			BC	Intrepid Ent.	Microsoft	31	
	Metal Slug 4 & 5	SNK	SNK	N/A		TBA 05	Burnout 4	Criterion	EA	36	
	Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks	Midway	Midway	37			Lobo	Kemco	Kemco	N/A	
	MotoGP 3	Climax	THQ	32			London Taxi	Data Design	TBA	38	
	MX Vs ATV Unleashed	THQ	THQ	36			The Mummy: The Animated Series	Hip	Hip	N/A	

XBOX CLASSICS

The latest and best of the budget-price range



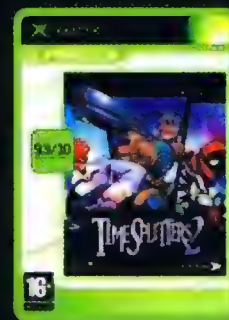
Tom Clancy's
Ghost Recon
Issue 09
Score 8.3



Mortal Kombat:
Deadly Alliance
Issue 12
Score 8.8



Harry Potter
and the
Prisoner of
Azkaban
Issue 30
Score 6.2



TimeSplitters 2
Issue 09
Score 9.3

Inbox



WRITE TO US at OAXM,
PO Box 1037 Bondi Junction
NSW 1355



POST ON THE FORUM
You can find it at www.derwenthoward.com.au



EMAIL US WITH your rants,
hopes and opinions at
staff@oxm.com.au

YOUR OPINIONS COUNT! Your input here has a direct effect on the content of your *Official Xbox Magazine*, so let us know which games you like or don't like, what you want to see more of or less of in the mag, or just rant mail, forum or email!



Letters 37 Editor

KEVIN CHEUNG

CAMP OF CHOICE: MICHASSAULT 2

Some people have no sense of direction. But if you don't care where you are, you aren't technically lost. Bear this in mind and this month's letters becomes enlightening.

I MUST OBJECT

The 'Chick Magnet' reference in your "Dear Santa" article (Issue 35) was, to put it nicely, patronising. I'm female, not a feminatzi, nor do I sport a butch haircut (that's cool for those who choose to). I enjoy girly things, but I also adore my Xbox. All I ask is for equality.

Nowhere on your "Dear Santa" pages did I see "Attract men with this package of . . ." etc. I could launch into a barrage of "I can drive a manual car, reverse park too... I can shoot a weapon, think and plan logistics under pressure and in danger...", but I won't! I have nothing to prove to anyone about being a female gamer. I just want you to accept that we are out there.

And for those of you who want to have a "magnet" to attract those chicks, "Monkey Puzzle" games won't cut it if you're a turd. The "magnet" I recommend, as a heterosexual girl, is intelligent conversation, humour (don't be a babbling idiot), respect, an acceptance that it's okay to be nervous, and enjoying each other's differences.

Oh, and if/when you first introduce your newfound love to your other love - The Xbox, which is not faithful, much less even heterosexual - please don't pop in *Playboy: The Mansion*.

she_attack, the forums

PS. What's with the girl germs stuff? If you're a male and you can't handle the thought of a girl touching your precious Xbox, don't expect her to want to

↓ We're sure that *Halo 2* was a hit for men and women over Christmas!



↑ *Rainbow Six 3*: somehow we think that Gav would be more at home on the terrorist team!

touch anything else personal you may have "tucked" away somewhere.

James would like to apologise unreservedly to all the shrinking violets he may have offended with the cheekiness of his words.



RAINBOW TWELVE 4

I have come up with the ultimate squad-based shooter for Xbox Live, a new version of *Rainbow Six*. The whole game is human players fighting human players. If you decide to join the terrorists, you will be able to choose from a number of countries from which to mount your operations. From this base your team (a maximum of 30 men) will pick a country to target, choose your terrorist activity then you will be transported to that place instantly and your mission will begin. If you

succeed, you will gain publicity in the daily paper, and you will receive weapons, money and other cool goodies.

If you decide to join the good guys you will be part of a 12-man strong team of hardened Special Forces operatives. Your captain (chosen by the clan) will receive phone calls about terrorist activity; it is then the commander's job to organise an assault plan using blueprints of the map you are fighting on and then you will execute the plan. Ubisoft would update the world map every month with news, maps and new weapons for both sides of the war. This would be a great game to show off the power of Xbox Live.

Reaperex, via email

We still haven't figured out why it's called *Rainbow Six* when there are only four team

STAR LETTER

→ Send snail mail to Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355; or email us at: staff@oxm.com.au. Thanks to Microsoft, the writer of the Star Letter gets a copy of *Halo 2*.



A GRUNT BROKE MY HALO!

Picture the scene: I've just got my limited-edition copy of *Halo 2* that I've had on pre-order for five months. I'm all set to skip all the way home like a little schoolgirl, when suddenly, some punk tries to snatch it. Fearing the loss of my precious, and lacking Master Chief's augmented strength, I lost all reason and proceeded to bash my would-be-robber over the head with my sturdy silver copy of *Halo 2*. Alas, while I succeeded in fighting him off, I seem to have damaged both the game and its packaging, and the shop will not accept it back in its damaged condition. Do you know of anyone who will take pity on my plight? Is there anywhere I can claim compensation for my losses? Do no-win no-fee lawyers take on these cases?

M.P. Smith, via email

If any of our readers spot a suspicious-looking man with a piece of *Halo 2* embedded in his skull, call *Crimestoppers* immediately!

↑ **Oh! Buy your own copy!**



Shorts

I'm rather disappointed at the lack of good RPGs on Xbox. I have only seen a few good ones like *Knights of the Old Republic* and *Morrowind*. *Fable* was a good game, but seriously, the world is getting tired of the 'Get revenge for my family' storyline. I have seen it in one too many RPGs...

Scatters, the forum

Well then, I hope you're ready for *Knights of the Old Republic II* and *Jade Empire*, because they're all coming very soon!

my mum recently signed up for the net(AAPT)and i was happy(duuuuh)so i go out and buy the starter kit put some deposits on live games and use the rest of my birthday/x-mas money to help mum pay for the fee....Then AAPT says we cant have ADSL but people in our building have it, ok it might be a mistake then my xbox starts to \$H!7 up and its the lense i grap my lens cleaner and its snapped in half!!! god help me it never ends

Purplemonkeydishwasher, the forum

Stop panicking and type better.

Dear Aunty Kev,
Batter up! I know the economic reasons for it, but I wish we'd get some more Baseball titles out here in Australia.

EcksBoksYewser, the forum

I'd tell you to go and play a real sport like cricket, but there aren't any cricket games out there!

How come my instruction manuel 4 halo2 has an elite on the front and my freind's has MC? Can I get it changed?

Anon, via email

They're randomly inserted so you have a 50/50 chance of getting the MC.

We have found a large football [in *Halo 2*] that can be beaten around with melee attacks and rockets. It can be found on any difficulty on a rooftop in the Metropolis level.

Blighly & Eigx73, via email

Awesome.

Halo 2 felt like a \$100 expansion pack, similar in level design, very similar in plot. That's the best they could come up



↑ RPG happy with *Jade Empire*

with in all the time it took to develop?

Jamie Witt, via email

The story is a bit shallow, but 'expansion pack'?! Have you even played the game?

Wat happened 2 the *Halo 2* preview level (New Mombasa) released at E3 2003? It's not in the game!

Anon, via email

It's still in the game as a mixture of the Outskirts and Metropolis missions. It isn't nearly as open ended as we'd been led to believe. It's weird how the video wasn't anywhere to be found on the special edition DVD.

members. Guess the other two must have snuffed it at some point.

I HEART MY QWEETY!

I have avoided X-Box Live up to now, not for monetary reasons and not because it was unavailable in my area. My reason was that I live with my girlfriend in a small one-bedroom flat, and I didn't want her to feel like a third wheel.

She's lovely, and knows I enjoy playing, and will join me for some co-op *Halo* play or other little Xbox romps. But I didn't want to have her feeling ignored by being in the same room as me while I was chatting and trash-talking and having fun with complete strangers over the Communicator. I knew I'd have a great time playing, but I didn't want to push for it. I treasure her too much.

She also knew why I avoided Xbox Live and shared my fears about it.

So how cool is it that, for my birthday, she has bought me Xbox Live and a Broadband connection?

This one goes out to you, my Qweety! You are the best! Take a bow, and know that there are some jealous gamers out there who wish that their partners could be as understanding and wonderful as you!

↓ Qweety hearts you too!



↑ *GTA San Andreas* - will it have the lasting appeal of the classics?

PS. I'll avoid my "Live" time when you're at home, so we can keep our quality time together. Games will never replace you in my heart!

EcksBoksYewser, via email

With a pet name like Qweety, there's no way your girlfriend is a fabrication. Aww, how cute...

AGE CONCERN

Back in Issue 34's Letters, S. Smith wrote in saying how old games basically sucked. I don't think this is true. Some of the finest games ever are the oldies. Yes, games have got better visually, and maybe even have greater depth and more playability - you can roam *GTAIII* for hours, but will you still pick it up, like you do so many classics, three years later?

Old games will still be bought or passed on, because a good game is rare and addiction is for life (or at least a really long time). Either way, keep them oldies rolling because they are a lot more than a time capsule. They are a lot of fun and at the end of the day that's what it's all about.

Ben Goldman, via email

For my money, old games only suck to the people who weren't around to play them at the time they came out. Hey, if games are getting better and better, this is the only natural explanation.

SPRUNG!

Don't get me wrong I love *Halo 2*, but 10 out of 10 for any game seems quite impossible to achieve because even *Halo 2* has it's flaws.

Now, you have to agree that *Halo 2*'s finish was quite, in a word, annoying; and it just seems to end like hundreds of other games - you fight the boss, he dies, you win, hurrah for you. *Halo 2* should have got a 8.8 or something close to that, but not 10.0 for God's sake.

Jaryd Kerr, via email

Are you sure you finished the game? We're pretty sure it ends on a cliffhanger note, which you don't see in many games. And besides, how else do you want a story-driven game to end? Would you prefer it to just go on and on?

The OXM team

What we've been up to this month



KEVIN CHEUNG // EDITOR

KEVIN SPENT an entire screening of *The Incredibles* cursing the fact that he'd finished the game well before hand and spoil the movie for himself.

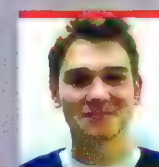
NOW PLAYING: *Halo 2*, *Mech 2*, *Mercenaries*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: Star Wars LEGO



MATT WOLFS // TECH EDITOR

MADDEN 2005 has been a mixed blessing for Matt. He absolutely loves it to death, but he's cut to his soul that it doesn't support Xbox Live.

NOW PLAYING: *Outrun 2*, *ESPN NFL*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: *Half-Life 2*



RALPH PANEBIANCO // WRITER

RALPH IS taking a two-month vacation in China from next week, where he's looking forward to squatting in toilets and a lot of public spitting.

NOW PLAYING: *Sudeki*, *Burnout 3*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: *Playboy the Mansion*



ANDY IRVING // REVIEWS EDITOR

ANDY got rejected by a photographer looking for models. Why? Being too young and good looking. We hates him, Precious!

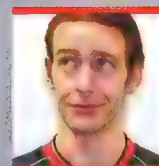
NOW PLAYING: *Halo 2*, *Warrior Within*, *PES4*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: *Pariah*, *GTA SA*



JAMES COTTEE // SUB-EDITOR

"THERE ARE women reading this mag, and they don't have a sense of humour!" - so quips a surprised James at the letter on page 044.

NOW PLAYING: *Fable*, *Worms*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: *Destroy All Humans*



DAN TOOSE // WRITER

DAN used the holiday break to catch up on all the games he missed in the past few months. We're waiting to hear about his next broadband bill.

NOW PLAYING: *Pro Evolution Soccer 4*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: *Stolen*



BEN TALBOT // PRODUCER

YOUNG scamp Ben is in love. It's unrequited mind you, but that doesn't stop him sifting through her trash and sighing soulfully a lot.

NOW PLAYING: *Halo 2*, *DOA Ultimate*, *Otogi 2*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: *The Fast & the Furious*



PAUL COOK // ART DIRECTOR

COOKIE HAS only a handful of memories from his Christmas break. The rest of them were lost in a sea of alcohol.

NOW PLAYING: *DOA Ultimate*
CAN'T WAIT FOR: *Conker Live & Reloaded*



FABLE

FOR EVERY CHOICE, A CONSEQUENCE.

What if the choices you made had everlasting repercussions? Your every action would immediately affect your appearance and change the way people perceive you. Would you wield a sword in the name of virtue, create a path of evil with spells and treachery, or become something in between? Before you create your destiny, know this: no two Fables are the same. What will yours be?

xbox.com.au/fable



Microsoft
game studios



it's good to play together

© 2004 Lionhead Studios Limited. Lionhead, the Lionhead logo and Fable are registered trademarks of Lionhead Studios Limited. Game designed by Lionhead Studios Ltd in conjunction with Big Blue Box Studios Ltd. © 2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Microsoft Game Studios, Xbox, and the Xbox Logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. 4583333



Old Dogs, New Tricks?

"Honor has not to be won; it must only not be lost."
Can Medal of Honor: Dogs of War put the woof back in warfare?

Words: Steve Brown

"CRY HAVOC! And let slip the dogs of war" is a vengeful line from Shakespeare, and an evening up of old scores is exactly what EA has in mind. *Dogs of War* is the latest title in its series of World War II shooters that have enjoyed great financial success but suffered dwindling critical acclaim.

The game that really stirred up the genre was *Call of Duty* on PC, which has now made its way onto Xbox in the form of *Call of Duty: Finest Hour* (Issue 36, 7.0). With this innovative and far more realistic franchise, Activision blitzkrieged territory *Medal of Honor* had occupied with some complacency and the uninspiring *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* (Issue 23, 7.1) was little but a wild shot fired over the shoulder as EA beat an »

Exclusive Access: Medal of Honor: Dogs of War Interview



► indignant retreat. *Medal of Honor: Dogs of War* is the new front, the game that EA hopes will regain its supremacy, learning many lessons from *Call of Duty* and gaining some inspiration from Ubisoft's upcoming *Brothers in Arms*.

Dan Winters, executive producer of *Dogs of War* will not be drawn into direct comparisons with *Call of Duty*, or *Brothers in Arms*. Nevertheless he makes it clear that realism will be a major factor in *Dogs of War*, also defending the previous MOH titles, whose realistic references we consider well hidden beneath pretty shallow arcade gameplay. "Authenticity has always been the key tenet for *Medal of Honor*. We do not pay our WWII setting mere lip service," he begins. "Exhaustive internal research takes place on every element of the game, including weapon behaviour, uniform details, and soldier psychology and training. Team members have taken research trips all across Europe, often finding remnants of actual battles in remote forests and ruined bunkers. Other trips include firing of period weapons, with careful digital recording of their motions, sounds and behaviours."

This is a clear parallel with *Brothers in Arms* and that game's dedication to incredibly detailed reconstruction of actual battlefields and very human squad behaviour. Where *Brothers in Arms* has recruited its own authentic military advisor in Col John Antal, *Medal of Honor* has for some time benefited from its rival WWII expert, Capt. Dale Dye. Winters explains that, "The storyline is carved from actual historical events and campaigns, and the character arcs and even some characters mimic the lives of real people. In addition to internal efforts, significant time is spent cultivating external experts, such as noted military consultant Capt. Dale Dye, all of

whom help guide the player's experience towards authenticity".

Although *Dogs of War* is not based upon a single real WWII story in terms of central characters, as *Brothers in Arms* is, more convincing humanity will be an essential factor in its new direction. Veterancy will mean that protection of truly expendable squad members directly benefits your main character in the skills that your buddies acquire and improve from level to level, and it'll be a real jolt to lose a man who you've relied upon for some time. Winters tells us our own character will also benefit from "Rally mode, which can be activated once your skill meter has been filled by heroic play." In Rally mode time will slow, your



"The player can guide his squadmates if he chooses, but it's not required"

Dan Winters, executive producer

accuracy will improve and you'll inspire those around you. Essentially it's a Bullet Time effect, actually slowing gameplay and giving you more time to consider and target enemies. While this now seems like a stock arcade trick pioneered in *Max Payne* and used in several action games since, including EA's *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing* (Issue 26, 8.2), Winters assures us that it is meant to realistically represent those moments of clarity and heroism that soldiers describe in wartime action.

Dan Winters did tell us all four of the *Dogs of War* locations, but EA then insisted that we only reveal the first European

campaign, that of St. Nazaire on the French coast. Of the other three locations we'll just say that you'll be very familiar with two of them from the *Call of Duty* games on PC and Xbox. *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* visited the Far East, but Winters states that "With *Dogs of War*, we are returning to the war for Europe, the philosophical heart of the series. The European theatre provides a dramatic backdrop for our gripping story. *Dogs of War* tells the single cohesive tale of one man whose passion and duty draw him through the entire war."

The real St. Nazaire raid on a Nazi dock was certainly gripping and dramatic, becoming known as 'The Greatest Raid of All'. It destroyed the dock and facilities that

Winters tells how "Our focus on research allows us to identify authentic portions of WWII that others miss, and tell compelling stories in those spaces. For example, most games ignore the entire early war, when Britain stood alone against the looming Wehrmacht. *Dogs of War* tells stories others forget, like the raid on St. Nazaire. Early in 1942, British commandos targeted a vital port in German-occupied France and launched an audacious 600-man raid. Real life hands us the moments, like desperate commandos ramming a destroyer packed with explosives into a dry dock at full speed. We abstract the great stories that history gives us and create compelling gameplay in these authentic situations."

Acting as part of a squad will certainly set *Dogs of War* apart from *Medal of Honor's* previous incarnations, which were attended by some very basic AI companions. Winters feels it is essential to convey the sense that "War is not a lone-wolf affair. As we broadened the scope of the player's activities in *Dogs of War* from smaller clandestine battles to massive assaults, we needed to broaden the forces that the player can bring to bear. In some cases, this will be Allied soldiers fighting alongside, but not with, Lt. Holt. In other cases, however, he will have a squad with him that will follow his orders."

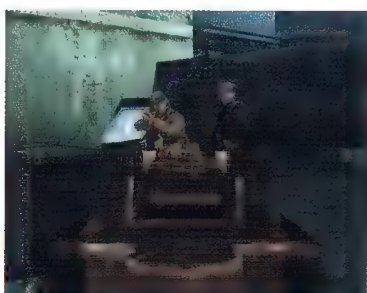
Again this seems to parallel the extensive squad controls we will see in *Brothers in Arms*, although *Dogs of War* will give players with different levels of tactical desire the choice to command directly or let far more advanced AI take care of business. "Dogs of War is not a game centred on squad control. We have enabled the player to guide his squadmates if he chooses, but we have not required him to do so," explains Winters. "The squad-based nature



► Commandos at the start of WWII looked similar to those from the First World War.



► All aboard Von Ryan's Express!



► The new accurate gun perspective.



of the AI system means that the player never need worry about his squad if he doesn't want to – the AI system will automatically provide covering fire and take other tactically intelligent actions, while at the same time, the squad will respond to and adroitly execute orders given by the player."

Dogs of War will also be the first in the *Medal of Honor* series on Xbox to support Xbox Live play. Winters confirms that, "Multiplayer and online multiplayer are very much a part of *Dogs of War*. We're planning an objective-based mode only available for multiplayer games that will combine the authenticity of *MOH* with the intensity that only multiplayer can offer. Of course, players will still be able to enjoy good old-fashioned deathmatch and team deathmatch for those times when their mood runs to fragging friends. The objective-based mode is unique to multiplayer. It uses levels and objectives quite different from the single-player experience. The two modes will require very different player skills to succeed in each."

In the three-way offensive now developing between the WWII shooter franchises of three of the biggest games publishers – EA (*Medal of Honor*), Activision (*Call of Duty*) and Ubisoft (*Brothers in Arms*) – *Dogs of War* is a clear signal from EA that the original WWII shooter may have stumbled on the field of battle, but has been taken back to boot camp for some serious retraining and is hopefully now becoming fighting fit for the planned release in spring 2005, when it will go up against *Brothers in Arms*.

← You'll follow the story of Lt. Holt, a US OSS agent operating in Europe behind enemy lines.



SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM



YES

I would like to subscribe to Official Australian Xbox Magazine starting with the next available issue.

1. YOUR DETAILS

TITLE ☐ MR ☐ MRS ☐ MS ☐ MISS

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Email Address _____

Tel no. (inc. area code) _____

☐ Tick if you do not wish to receive information about special promotions from Derwent Howard and carefully selected partners.

2. PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

AUSTRALIA

☐ One payment of \$69.95 FOR 6 months SAVE \$19.75 OFF COVER PRICE

☐ One payment of \$99.95 FOR 12 months SAVE \$54.45 OFF COVER PRICE

NEW ZEALAND

☐ One payment of \$117.95 FOR 12 months SAVE \$61.45 OFF COVER PRICE

INTERNATIONAL

☐ One payment of \$159.95 FOR 12 months SAVE \$19.45 OFF COVER PRICE

3. METHOD OF PAYMENT

☐ Cheque/Money Order (Aust only) make payable to Derwent Howard Pty Ltd. (AUD\$ drawn on an Australian bank account)

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Bankcard

Card No

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Expiry date □ □ / □ □

Card Holder Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

DERWENT  HOWARD

ORDER CODE: OXM37

OFFER ENDS: 22.02.2005

ONLY \$8.35 PER ISSUE!

DEMO DVD! 6 MASSIVE PLAYABLE DEMOS!



SAVE 44% OFF THE COVER PRICE!



6 ISSUES FOR \$69.95

SAVE \$19.75 OFF COVER PRICE!

12 ISSUES FOR \$99.95

SAVE \$54.45 OFF COVER PRICE!



FREE POST:

Derwent Howard, Reply Paid 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355

SUBSCRIBE AND HAVE

SUBSCRIBE AND **SAVE!**

ACT NOW FOR MASSIVE SAVINGS!

- Pay only \$8.35 per issue...
...save \$6.60 off the cover price
- Only \$99.95 for 12 issues!



3 WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE:

- Go to our website:
www.derwenthoward.com.au
- Call our order hotline:
1800 007 820
Lines are open 9AM-5PM Monday - Friday
- Fill in the form & FREEPOST to:
Derwent Howard, Reply Paid 1037,
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR FOR **LESS!**

Exclusive Access: Forza Motorsport

XBOX



We take the biggest Xbox racer ever on its biggest test drive yet. Join us!

FORZA MOTORSPORT™



**ONLY ON
XBOX**

Words: Gavin Ogden

Dev: Microsoft	Pub: Microsoft
Players: 1-4 Split	Live: 2-8 players
Versus: 2-8 S.Link	Release: April 05
www.forzamotorsport.net	



DRIVING GAMES are all the rage on Xbox and it's not hard to understand why. The console's cutting-edge capabilities coupled with an unmatched high-speed online gaming service makes for a perfect racing environment. But not since *Sega GT Online* (Issue 24, 8.7) has Xbox been host to a serious, realistic simulation of the petrolhead's sport. *Juiced* (Issue 33, 8.0) failed to completely quench our thirst for an online modding monster, but changes to its handling model have been made under new publisher THQ for its launch next year. We'll let you know how that pans out.

In the meantime, the torch has been passed back to Microsoft, and with the help of *PGR2* (Issue 23, 9.3) developer Bizarre

Creations and its internal US studio, Xbox looks to have the killer driving game on its hands that'll give Sony's *Gran Turismo 4* more than just a run for its money.

The first time we had a good look at *Forza* was at Microsoft Game Studios in Seattle (though most of our attention was, unsurprisingly, focused on *Halo 2* at the time). What we saw impressed us but when we played it, the general feeling was that it was a tad on the difficult side. Tad meaning we couldn't place higher than last. Since then we've prayed to the racing gods that the difficulty would be toned down a touch, opening the game up to more than just the hardcore, *Redline*-reading boy racer. And after giving the latest build a good seeing to, our prayers seem to have been answered. >>

Exclusive Access: Forza Motorsport

XBOX

» "I'll start off by saying that with *Forza* we really set out to create the first fully customisable, deep driving simulation on Xbox," explains art director and ex-race driver Kiki Wolfkill (quiet at the back). "The three things that we're definitely hanging our hats on are the ideas of car ownership and personalisation with the livery editor. Car ownership is based on the idea that you

build up your own collection. But it won't just be a collection of cars, it'll be a collection of upgrades and tuning that you can do to each model you've won.

"We're also setting a new benchmark in the physics of the driving simulation itself, so the physics modelling, the AI behaviour, the visual fidelity - I think all these aspects will make a very accurate and deep driving

simulator. And the online side is really the third component of the three things that we feel differentiates *Forza Motorsport* from other games out there."

During our lengthy one-on-one walkthrough of *Forza* at Microsoft's London HQ, we were shown the colossal livery editor. This lets you tinker around with various colour schemes and decal options »



↑ Who could do this to a Porsche 911 GT3?



↑ The McLaren F1 GTR looks the part.



↑ The TVR Tuscan S makes an appearance.

A DESIGN FOR LIFE Take an average production car and make it something very special



↑ Once you've picked out a car, you can make loads of different modifications to it.



↑ Don't like the front end? Then change it to suit your style.

↑ Make the rear wing something to be proud of.



↑ The Vauxhall VX220 goes for it.

» to make your car look like something out of *The Fast and the Furious* but way cooler. The idea behind this painter and decorator's dream mode is that gamers will be able to have their own unique identity when racing over Xbox Live. And over time, you'll begin to recognise the colours of the racers you've traded paint with. "Racing and motorsport fans aren't just passionate about a car's performance or the racing," adds Wolfkill, "they're passionate about how their car looks, too."

When the game was announced back in May at the US videogame extravaganza that is E3, another studio was mentioned as having a hand in *Forza's* development. That studio was none other than the Liverpool-based Bizarre Creations, famed for creating the *Project Gotham Racing* series. "We set out with *Gotham* to really put a dent in the armour of *Gran Turismo*," states Wolfkill. "I was the art director on both *Gotham* racing games. We were very open with Bizarre Creations about what we were doing, and we talked about a lot of things. What we mostly shared with each other was reference materials. We talked about how we were doing things, and what game modes we were doing. Obviously Bizarre Creations is a very important partner to us, and we were very open with them from the beginning of *Forza's* development. We don't want people to have the perception that we were in competition with *Gotham*."



↑ Now you're racing: the Toyota GTR is a dream mean machine but you'll have to race hard to earn it.

Although both games have fast cars, they are different kinds of racers. But Wolfkill is adamant that fans of *Gotham* and more arcade-style racers such as *RalliSport Challenge 2* and *Burnout 3: Takedown* will be able to adjust to *Forza's* more serious approach even though, by her own admission, Wolfkill had to stop playing *Burnout 3* because "it was ruining my driving style."

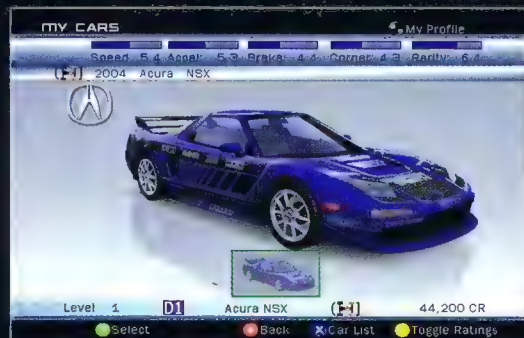
The team working under the hood of *Forza* believes that different people experience racing games in different ways. Some gamers are really all about the driving and the racing, while other people are more concerned with showing off what they've created - whether they're showing off because they've managed to get another 100bhp out of their car or showing off what they've done with the livery editor. You'll

find this type of racing gamer driving up and down the local high street all night with old-school tunes blaring out.

But it's not just about making your car look pretty. It's about making it go like a rocket, too. "What we've done is put together a set of upgrades that are both cosmetic and performance-enhancing," continues Wolfkill. "But you can still be successful racing without ever touching



↑ We've never liked yellow. Blue's far cooler.



↑ Every race car needs its go-faster stripes.



↑ After a few changes, your brand new racer is ready for action. Try not to break it on the first corner.



WORLD RACING

Variety is the spice of a race driver's life

IN TOTAL there will be 17 environments to race through in the finished game. We're told to expect a handful of both real-world tracks and fictional tracks, aside from the ones based in real cities. Interestingly though, we're told more are still to be announced, so watch this space.



↑ Don't be distracted by the lush trackside environments...



↑ ...keep your eyes on the prize

» your car. We don't want the fact you can upgrade your car to become a barrier, but we do want that to be both available and deep enough for people who are interested in pursuing that."

The final game will have over 150 market-branded upgrades to choose from, and they're all specific to the 200-plus cars from 60 manufacturers. "I'd say that around 50 of those are race cars, where we've gone and licensed the cars directly from race teams, and 150 are production cars. And it's these production cars where you'll find the ability to upgrade. Once you get into the race cars however, upgrading becomes less valuable because those cars are pretty much maxed out to begin with."

Online is where the game is really set to take off, though. You'll be able to create what will be known as a Car Club with up



to 100 other racers, and the game will track all kinds of stats. "You'll be able to load, trade, download new cars and set-ups on a per car/per track basis," Wolfkill reveals. "With the livery editor, we foresee that people will spend hours creating a unique logo for themselves. You'll be able to recognise gamers you've raced against online with the liveries."

"We have hundreds of leaderboards," adds Wolfkill, "and we'll be tracking the stats of the Car Clubs on specific leaderboards. We'll be announcing a bunch of details, regarding stat tracking and what exactly we're going to be doing, very shortly. What I can tell you right now is that we will track everything..."

At this point in the demo, Wolfkill walked us through the simple process of buying an upgrade with credits won in the career



↑ The Ferrari 333 is one of the fastest cars available. And boy is it fast...

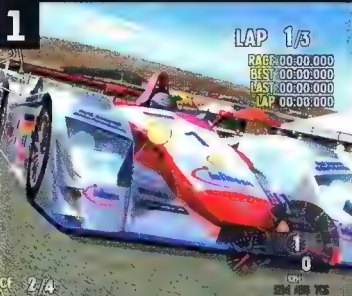


↑ An Audi A4 touring car leads the way. This is all about the correct racing line, so make sure your head's screwed on right because concentration is the key to winning.

BUMPER TO BUMPER

Where's there's blame
there's a claim

FORZA'S DAMAGE model is so realistic you'll think you've got whiplash after an on-screen pile-up.



1 You start each race with a brand new car just waiting to be floored.



2 All it takes to dink the bodywork is one small moment of madness.



3 As the bodywork deteriorates so does the car's performance.



Hitting the gravel traps too many times will start to affect your car's performance.

mode. Before you slap the mod on your car, you can see how it'll affect the car's performance by flicking through torque charts and numerous other diagrams. You can also see if the upgrade in question will change the class of your car, thus affecting the type of races you're eligible to enter.

"Anything that you'd be able to do to a production model in real life, you can do in the game. Aside from just engine parts, you can choose to focus on the handling of the car and its aerodynamics. We worked with two engineers from Ferrari, one of whom had been at Microsoft and the other now is. What they really helped us with was the dos and don'ts of simulating aerodynamics. One of the engineers is also working on the F1 simulation for the F1 team. He was really

able to point out the pitfalls of simulating aerodynamics and airflow over the rear wing. It was really useful for us to have that extra input," says Wolfkill.

For the Kwik-Fit fitters among you, you'll be able to change all parts of the car including the tyres, front bumper, rear wing, suspension, transmission and tyre pressure. But you don't have to take it this seriously to win a race. "Each of the four tyres is modelled separately and factors such as grip, heat and wear will all play their part in the performance of the car - especially over long endurance races," the art director explains. "You can choose to turn these effects on or off in the menus if you wish too, I should point out. These settings will give you that extra tenth of a second when racing on the

tracks. I have to say we don't expect everybody to go this deep into the game, but it's there for those gamers who want it and enjoy hot lapping."

Forza Motorsport is now looking its best yet. The roar of the engines seem to be far more aggressive and in your eardrums, while the visuals sparkle with a fine polish. Microsoft's US team is now concentrating on hunting down those pesky bugs and glitches in preparation for the game's release in the spring. But don't just take our word for it. Pop in your exclusive playable demo disc, fire up the trial version, and take a look for yourself. This is going to be something very special indeed - especially over Xbox Live. What's that? *Gran Turismo 4* doesn't even have online play? Oh dear...

"You'll be able to create what will be known as a Car Club online with up to 100 other racers"



A Ferrari 360 makes a mistake and quickly gets shunted into last place.



Only look behind when you're on a straight. Problems arise if you don't...



Sam will now deliver a far wider range of hand-to-hand combat moves. Kapow!

The lead game designer of the stealth sequel gives us the hard cell

Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory



Words: Steve Brown

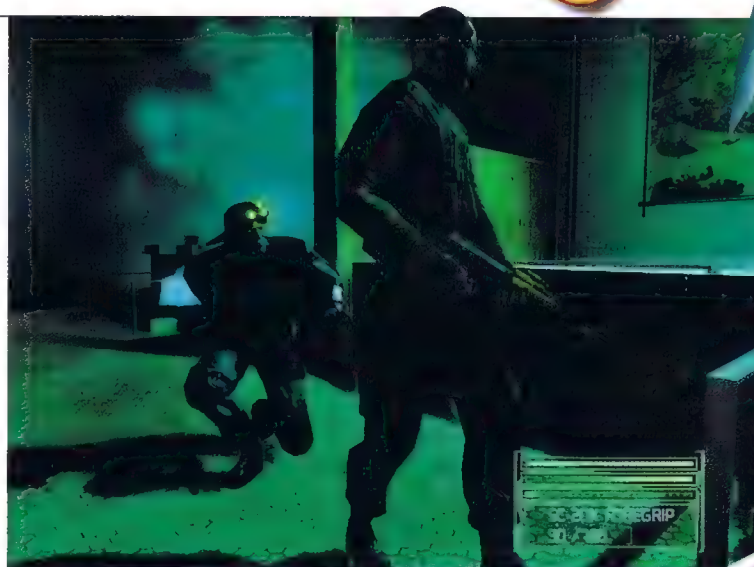
Dev/Pub: Ubisoft	Release: Mar 2005
Players: 1-2	Live: 2 Co-op, 4 Vs.
Co-op: 2 Split/5 Link	Versus: 4 S.Link
www.splintercell3.com	

IF TERRORISTS had kidnapped my maths teacher when I was at school, the last thing I'd have wanted to do would have been to send in Sam Fisher to rescue him from their evil clutches. No, he could have languished in a dank cell, living on beetles and brackish effluent until he'd calculated the trillionth decimal place of Pi for all I'd have cared. I like to think he'd have had time enough to reconsider the full injustice of detention during his extra-long summer holiday. But Sam Fisher obviously had more fun at school than I did. In *Chaos Theory* he rushes off to repossess maths genius Bruce Morganholt from the

Peruvian guerrilla group, People's Voice, who needed someone to sort out a dispute over their camp's non-itemised phone bill.

The script for *Chaos Theory* has been penned by the writer of the original *Splinter Cell* (Issue 08, 97) so you can rest assured he understands the subtlety of Sam's character and dialogue very well indeed. And before sceptics ponder the actual subtleties of one-man army Sam Fisher, he's not a totally insensitive killing machine. Coming across a brutal torture scene in the Lighthouse level we saw played through in its entirety, Sam pauses after dispatching the electrode-wielding guards to disobey orders and cut down the ravaged lifeless form of the unfortunate detainee. His commander warns him to stay rational and subdue such time-wasting emotions, but it's these small moments of humanity that give Fisher surprising personality.

Lead game designer Pierre Rivest gives us a greater insight into the plot and



Lighting and shadowing have been given superb attention.



SAM VS. THE WORLD

Multiplayer moves revealed!

THE VERSUS mode will include new moves like Ledge Grab for heaving opponents off gangways, Berserk mode to spin and knock down a clinging spy, and humiliation moves to hold a spy down and have a few words in his ear before killing him. Scenario mode will have Bombing, Extraction and Neutralisation Objectives, while Disk Hunt mode is recovery of randomly placed data. Mercenaries can destroy walls to get at spies, but holes will persist and give spies new paths through maps.



↑ The knife now has many uses, including ripping cloth and piercing fuel tanks.



» locations, revealing that although captured by People's Voice, Morganholt's abduction has been commissioned "by a higher guy" to gather information. "It's basically technological information warfare - not nuclear weapons, but a mathematical algorithm which allows the owner to control certain weapons," explains Rivest. The story is set in 2008 and the 14 levels (more numerous and individually longer than the previous game's eight) span, according to Rivest, "Peru, major US cities like New York... you'll go on a cargo ship, you'll be in Hokkaido - there are a couple of missions in Japan and some missions in Seoul, Korea. The boat is very different, set in a confined environment. We've tried to vary the pace and feel of the game through every level."

Rivest has flown over on a 48-hour round trip from Ubisoft Montreal to show us the latest *Chaos Theory* single-player code. We're sure it's just jetlag and the fact that enemy weapons accuracy is still set too lethal that means he forgets to save several

times and gets killed halfway through the impressive Lighthouse level. Still, it means we eventually get to see the full level played through to the end a number of times, so we aren't complaining!

It's interesting that Rivest forgot to save, because in this *Splinter Cell* the onus to save will be on the player and not on caretaker checkpoints. We ask the lead designer if the ability to quick-save at any time will destroy essential tension. "The counter-argument," says Rivest, "is previously whenever there was an auto-save you knew that a climactic event was about to happen." He maintains, "Hardcore players and focus testers still want to go through the map once without saving at all. Yes, it might take away a bit of tension for players who like saving all the time, but for those who prefer not to save, they will be able to [play without saving]."

There's also the new rating system to consider. At the end of every level there will be an Objective Review, with stats that give you an overall Success Rating. At the end of

the game a code is generated from these that will give you a worldwide ranking on Live. "On Easy difficulty you can save wherever you want," explains Rivest. "On medium you will have five saves, after which you'll lose a couple of rating points for every extra save. On Hard you have zero saves before losing points." Every extra save will lose you around one per cent of your overall level rating.

Before embarking on missions, *Chaos Theory* will first prepare the player with new video briefings. There will also be an evolving loadout screen that no longer forces set equipment on the player. Instead it allows a choice of Recommended, Stealth or Assault kit combinations. More gadgets and guns are added as the game progresses. Once a level begins you will also have access to a new 3D map with marked objectives, making planning and navigation far

→ The only time that *Splinter Cell* looks ropery.



SPY AND THE FAMILY PRONE

Animation's what you need...

NEW ANIMATIONS for Sam mean his feet and hands fit realistically to any surface. He can go fully prone to squeeze through crawl spaces and as he closes on enemies his animations change to reflect caution. His hand-to-hand moves now include grab, knock-out and lethal, and he can grab and strangle while dangling by his feet from overhead pipes. Interrogated NPCs now have full lip synching.

1



↑ Office cleaners: threat to democracy!

2

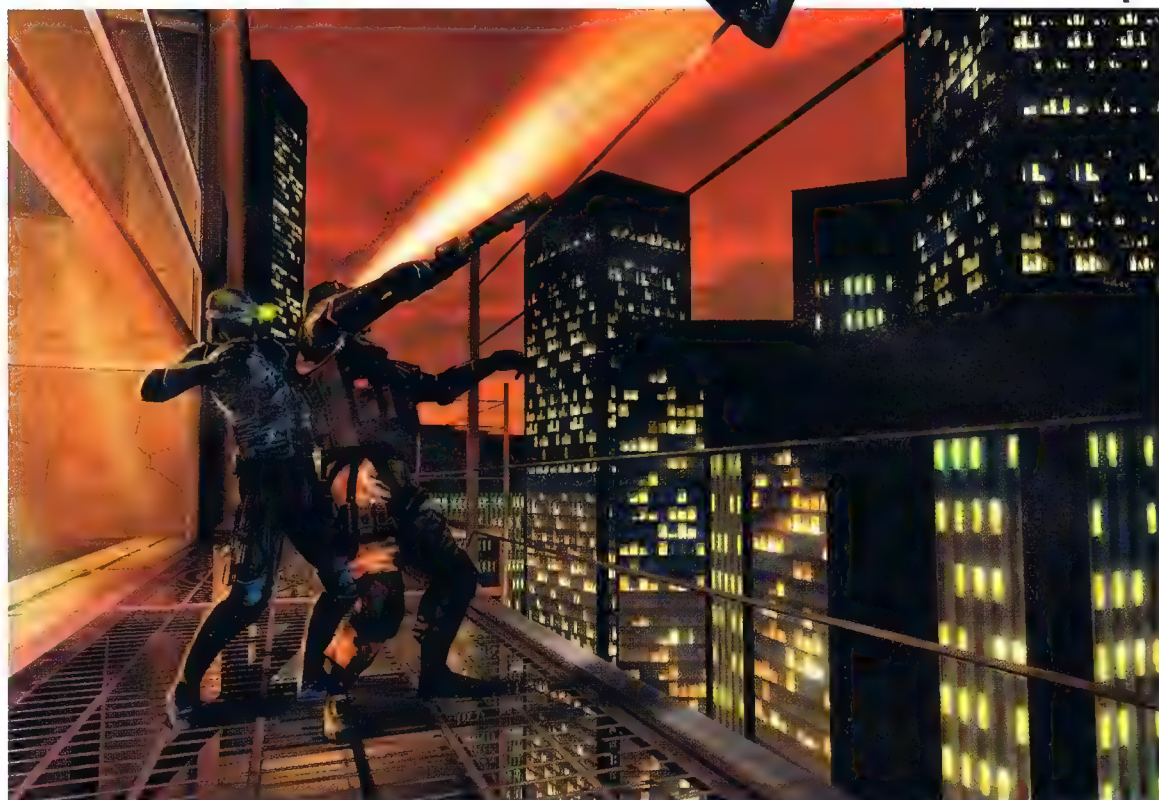


↑ Hey mister, you missed a spot...

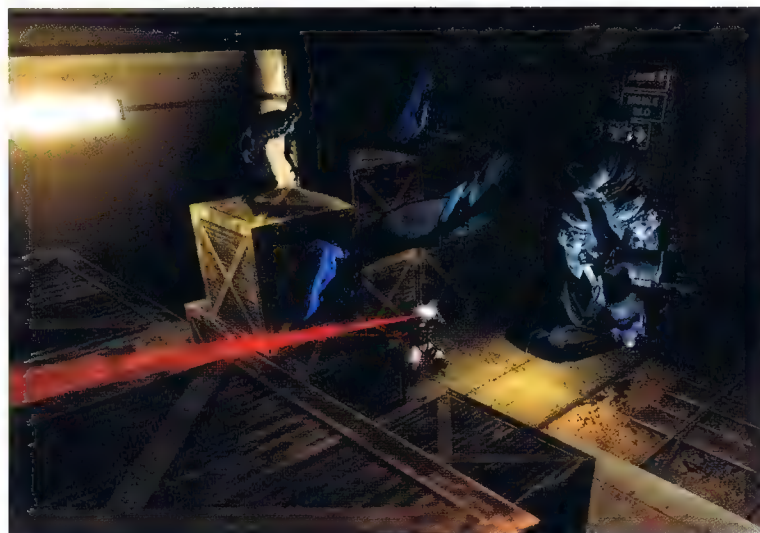
3



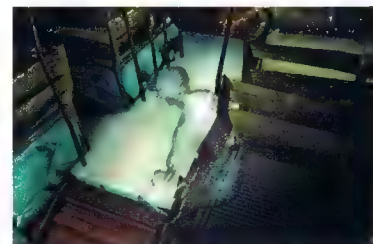
↑ ...and now your Vilela is all mine.



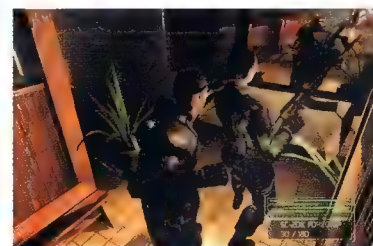
↑ The romantic moment went bad after the mercenary turned down Sam's engagement proposal for the third time that month.



↑ New animations make for some amazing falling physics for bodies.



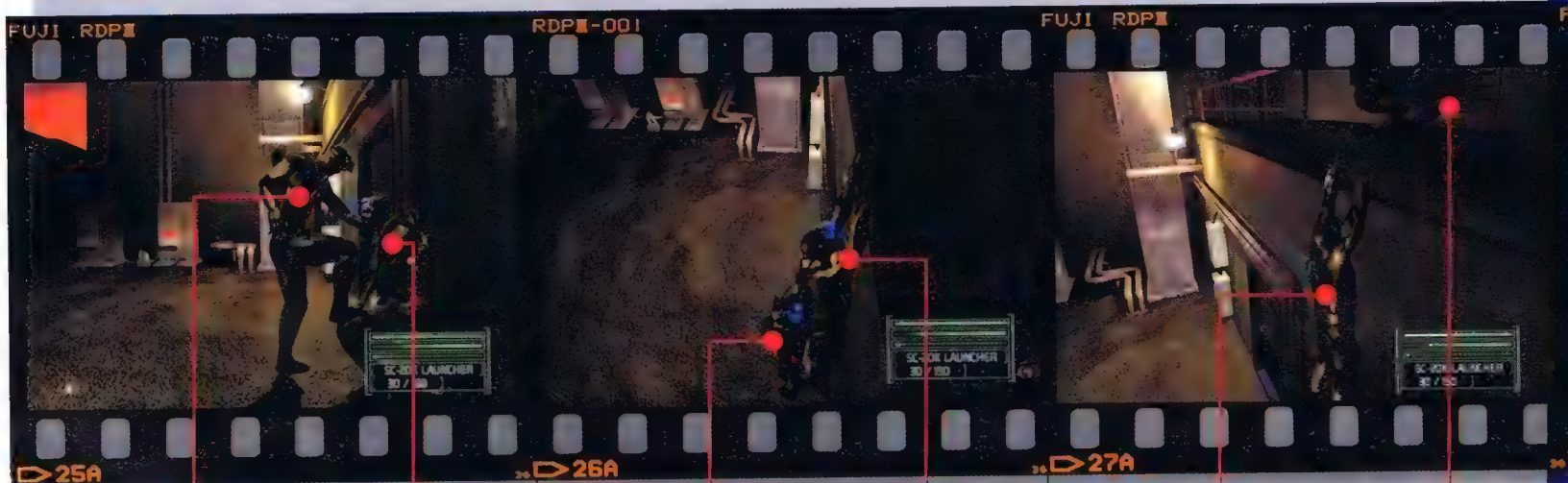
↑ Turn invisible briefly with the new suit.



↑ He should have seen that coming.

POP DOWN THE CO-OP

Lending a helping hand in multiplayer



- 1 You can 'nurse' a team-mate when face to face, restoring health.
 - 2 Spies can also exchange gadgets when right next to each other.
 - 3 Spy 1 makes it over the obstacle and Spy 2 is able to climb up after.
- You will also be able to remove spy bullets and spy traps from allies.

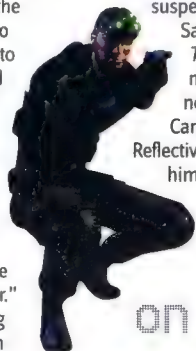
» easier. Objectives will be divided into Primary, Secondary and Opportunity. While Primary are essential to level success, Secondary are not, but if left will recur as Primary objectives in subsequent missions. Opportunity objectives, such as scanning barcodes on equipment crates, will raise your Objective score at the end of a mission.

"The first two games had a lot of trial and error and game over situations," admits Rivest. "We've tried to reduce these as much as possible. That's why we're giving the player different Mission Objectives, so Primary ones always have two ways to do them. If you kill a guy you needed information from, there will be another way to get it - by hacking an indestructible server for instance. We don't want you to be able to kill a sergeant without knowing you needed him later for a retinal scanner. Boom - game over! We've tried to limit frustration - there will be a bigger margin of error for the player."

This greater freedom in planning and execution extends to level design

too. In *Chaos Theory* there will be multiple routes through missions and, from intensive testing sessions, Rivest believes that while 80 per cent of more casual players will choose the main path, up to 20 per cent will explore alternative routes such as the secondary cave system bypassing a guarded footbridge that we saw in the Lighthouse level.

The heavy stealth element of *Splinter Cell* has always relied upon experimental but believable gadgets - the sort that you suspect are already in use by the real Sam Fishers of this world. *Chaos Theory* certainly doesn't stint on new toys for the boys. Sam is now outfitted in a Thermoptic Camouflage Suit that uses Retro-Reflective Projection technology to render him virtually invisible for short periods of time. This will not



"It certainly doesn't stint on new toys for the boys"

work in the rain however, or while using a weapon. His goggles have also been beefed up with full EMF vision that picks up electromagnetic fields from bodies and power sources. They can be used to scan objects such as the barcodes mentioned previously and to invisibly paint targets with a laser.

Sam is now equipped with an OCP pistol that temporarily malfunctions electronic devices (lights, generators etc) when fired at them. Other weapon changes include the ability to switch rifle shoulders for more convenient firing positions, and the fact that you can now switch between Sticky Cameras - you're no longer restricted to the view of the last one fired. They can also be retrieved and reused. Even Sam's knife now enjoys greater purpose. We've already been shown how it can be used to slice entry-slits through fabrics such as plastic sheeting, but

Rivest also shows us how it can cut Sam's way into tents and be used to pierce generator fuel tanks so they run dry and cause temporary lighting systems to fail. Bullets, too, can now penetrate surfaces depending on the density of material.

Also on the gadget front, we're shown how Sam can now break locks as well as pick them. Breaking is far faster but creates significantly more noise. Noise detection will be handled and represented quite differently in *Chaos Theory*. Above Sam's Stealth meter, which shows how much noise he's making, is displayed a new Sound Masking bar that denotes levels of environmental noise and shows that Sam can get away with making more ruckus than usual if masked by louder sounds around him.

Chaos Theory is undoubtedly one of the best-looking games on Xbox, and has the brains to match its dark, smouldering looks. It offers more options in single- and multiplayer, refined gadgets with real application, astonishingly realistic animation and an intriguing script that's worthy of a modern thriller writer. Tom Clancy even.



↑ Another co-operative move now available in the multiplayer game.



↑ Sam pauses to affix the new SC-20K shotgun attachment.

Pray for a full frontal assault.



You're going to love her killer moves. When her world is threatened by the awakening of ancient evil, Ailish and three other great heroes must unite to defeat it. Now this enchanting princess, a brave warrior, a high-flying gunslinger, and a dark huntress will battle through the Realm of Shadows on a quest to reclaim their world. Rotate between each character and use all their powers to prevail in one of the most intense action role playing games. Sudeki will leave you breathless.

CLIMAX

Microsoft
game studios

SUDEKI™



it's good to play together

xbox.com/sudeki

©2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft Game Studios logo, Sudeki and the Xbox logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Developed by Climax. Climax and its logo are trademarks of Climax Group. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. MES03245

Reviews

Written by gamers who live and love games



Kevin Says...

IF THE holiday season didn't deliver the goods, fear not because we've got a ton of games on which to spend that cash you got from seldom-seen relatives.

MechAssault 2: Lone Wolf, already a huge hit in the US, looks set to ignite online arenas the world over, improving on its robo-blasting, Live-pioneering predecessor.

The mechanical massacring doesn't stop there however, as the long-awaited space oddity *Scrapland*, courtesy of twisted scripter American McGee, touches down. *Scrapland* doesn't boast the same online multiplayer machinations as *MechAssault 2* (as previously expected), but for an alternative spin on the adventure genre, check it out. Enjoy the issue.

Our Badges explained



XBOX ELITE

Any game scoring a whopping 8.5 or more.



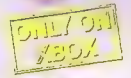
GAME OF THE MONTH

Our favourite of the games reviewed this month.



XBOX LIVE

Downloadable content, online play, or both.



ONLY ON XBOX

An Xbox-exclusive game for at least three months.



ON THE DISC

A playable trial or movie of the game is on our disc.

Score Key

8.5-10.0

THE XBOX ELITE - ONE OF THE VERY BEST AVAILABLE

7.5-8.4

A TOP-QUALITY RELEASE THAT'S WELL WORTH HAVING

6.5-7.4

STILL WELL WORTH CONSIDERING, BUT HAS SOME FLAWS

5.0-6.4

AN AVERAGE TITLE WITH NOTHING OUTSTANDING TO OFFER

2.5-4.9

A BAD GAME, AND ONE YOU SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH

0.0-2.4

CALLING SUCH A RANCID STINKER A 'GAME' IS LIBELLOUS



MechAssault 2: Lone Wolf **P078**

Climb aboard a whole host of virtual VTs in this ace online shooter.

Scrapland **P070**

Completely bonkers, yet fun-filled futuristic action-adventure title.

ESPN NFL 2005 **P074**

Is this latest ESPN update a match for Madden?

ESPN NHL 2005 **P071**

The big boys with big sticks don't lose out.

ESPN NBA 2005 **P076**

The best basketball in town dunks in another excellent update.

Outlaw Golf 2 **P078**

The punky putter returns with more courses and crazier characters.

Syberia II **P071**

The amiable Arctic adventure finally comes in from the cold.

Cabela's Deer Hunter **P082**

A simple budget shooter for the budding hunters out there.

Cabela's Big Game Hunter **P083**

Deer's not enough? Try this other budget shooter on for size.

Reviews Directory **P084**

Looking for the best? You'll find all of the Xbox's greatest in here.



↑ Expect to go up against mechs as big as yours throughout the game.

MechAssault 2: Lone Wolf

Mech some noise! It's back and it's harder than ever

Words: Gavin Ogden & Kevin Cheung

✕ Dev: Day 1 Studios	✕ Pub: Microsoft
✕ Players: 1	✕ Live: 2-12 players
✕ Players: 2-12 S.Link	✕ Release: January 05
✕ www.xbox.com/mechassault2	

THE ORIGINAL *MechAssault* (Issue 09, 8.0) stomped onto Xbox back in November 2002, and since launch developer Day 1 has been busy building a second helping of heavy metal that'll make your eyes and ears bleed. As renowned spoof rock band Spinal Tap would say, everything has been turned up to 11.

The single-player game has expanded in every direction, the Xbox Live multiplayer options have improved, the special effects are to die for and the environments are far more destructible than the original. But the biggest change to the robo-stomping formula is the ability to pilot almost every mech you find in the game. This time round, you are the man and not just the machine.

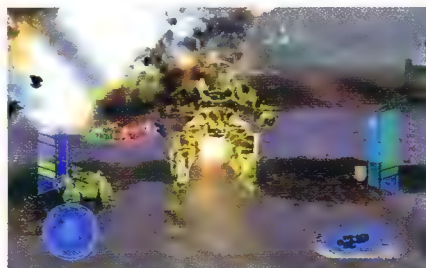
Rather than beginning each linear level in a different mech specifically tooled up for the job at hand, you have a choice of jumping in and out of not just enemy mechs, but also tanks scattered around each level. Many of the objectives require you to hop in a certain model. This is fine if it's just sitting there waiting to be nicked, but sometimes

there's already someone in it firing big rockets at you, which makes it tricky to sneak up from behind in a huge mech of your own.

But Day 1 has come up with a solution. As the emphasis this time round is more on the person driving the mech than the metal hulk >>



↑ Planes don't trouble mechs at all.



↑ Click the Right stick to use special powers.



↑ Grab salvage for health and ammo.



Spider-Mech

THE MECHS in *Lone Wolf* can climb walls and reach the places other mechs cannot reach.

1



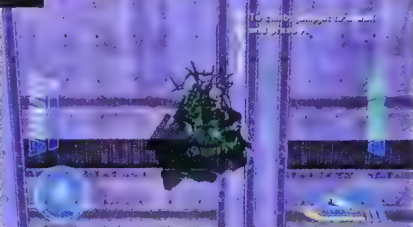
↑ Need to get to the other side but your built-in jump jets won't take you high enough?

2



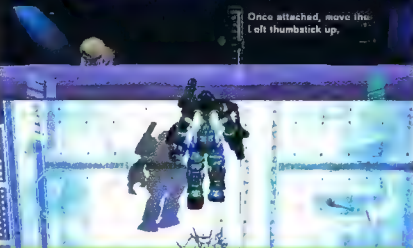
↑ Don't fret! Boost as high as you can, then hit A to punch a hole in the wall and cling on.

3



↑ Press up on the Left stick to boost further up the wall, and then hit A to catch your breath.

4



↑ Repeat until you make it all the way up. Now search out pick-ups on top of the building.



↑ You get to play with big-ass tanks too!



↑ You'll poo your pants when you first see this mechanical animal racing towards you.



↑ Use the flamethrower when the enemy is close enough.

» itself, a new feature has been implemented that really works. Running around on foot, you can jump into any vehicle that's been left empty or climb into the cockpit of an enemy mech that's sitting around idly.

Lone Wolf's story, cutscenes and gameplay remain pretty much the same compared to the original. Even the over-the-top American military voiceovers are back, sounding exactly the same as before. And with the basic gameplay exactly the same, you'll be forgiven for thinking you're playing the original at times.

You play the role of the same nameless MechWarrior, and the story picks up where the original left off. The futuristic sci-fi plot orbits around the idea of searching out several data cores that hold the key to powers beyond belief. Your

team of Dragoons is locked in a race for the cores against an evil empire, hellbent on getting to each one first. Impressive little cutscenes keep things moving and, more importantly, keep you up to speed with what's going on and where you're at.

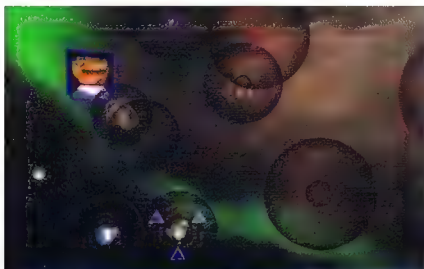
Gameplay is pretty much 'shoot everything that moves'. If you played the first one you'll have no problem slipping right back into the cockpit of the mechs. The Left stick moves the mech in the direction you want, while the Right one aims its huge array of weapons. By pulling the Left trigger, you cycle through the two or three (depending on what type of mech you've commandeered) weapon choices, and Right unleashes hell.

Most of the mechs you come across have the ability to hover for a handful of seconds. The ones that can't are usually too heavy and slow due to

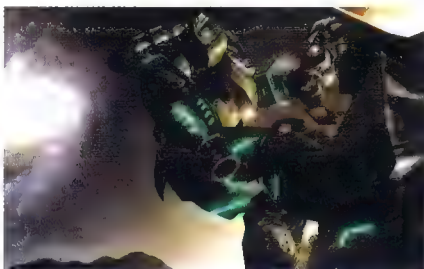
↑ AH, THIS FEELS GOOD: THE CONTROL SYSTEM IS VERY SIMPLE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH HALO - AND WHO ISN'T?



↑ The Mechwarrior auditions for the Oral B ad.



↑ The different factions fight over the planets.



↑ Mech-jack the suckers standing still.



↑ Even a careless turn can reduce a building into rubble. Fire a few spare rounds into the cities and watch them crumble!

Bonus info

DR. CLAW
Battlesuits are equipped with a gun arm, a mortar launcher and a giant grappling claw that lets them hitch a ride



with VTOL jets, scale sheer walls and jack into unsuspecting enemy mechs.

"MechAssault 2 should've given players the option to delve even deeper into the game"

» the amount of armour and size of its weapons. You can hover by clicking and holding the Left thumbstick, while clicking the Right stick activates your mech's other special ability. This can be anything from a shield to a magnetic field that makes it impossible for the enemy's weapons to get a lock on you. These functions last for a limited time and slowly recharge over time. If you're to be successful in battles - and there are a lot of 'em - you'll need to be able to use everything the mech has to offer.

Each level is extremely linear. On-screen icons identify the way forward, or objects that need to be demolished, in order to complete your objectives.

You'll never find yourself drifting around huge empty levels wondering where you should be going next thanks to the convenient coloured markers on the radar. The game is designed this way to keep the action levels high - all the time. Wave after wave of enemies are constantly thrown at you, and you'll spend the same amount of time hammering the fire button as you would playing *Halo 2* (Issue 34, 10.0) on Live.

The quest for the holy data cores and total destruction of the enemy leads you across the universe and many different environments. You'll get to wreak havoc in skyscraper-covered cities, huge great dirty swamps and snow-capped

mountain bases. But again, these look all too similar to the original.

Because you can now get out of the mech and run around on foot, a handful of levels involve you having to sneak around and plant explosives on designated targets, or play simple Simon Says games with the keypad to unlock security gates. Frankly, these get in the way of the testosterone-fuelled heavy weapon mayhem, as you're a sitting duck whenever you get caught - which you will. All too often, it's too easy to get stuck on debris as you run from a tank or enemy mech. Thankfully though, these levels are few and far between.

Apart from running around on foot, the other main drawback of *MechAssault 2* is the ability to strap your character into human-sized battle armour. They're highly mobile and light on weaponry, but they can't take too much of a beating from assault mechs. The real reason you'll want to pilot one of these suits is the ability to mech-jack. That is, you'll jump on to the back of »



↑ Grab hold of a VTOL jet to get transported around quickly.



↑ As with the original, PPCs must be charged up before firing.



↑ The sense of scale isn't just a visual effect. As mechs come running past you, you'll feel the earth shaking beneath your feet (well actually, it's just your control pad vibrating).



↑ Flamethrowers are especially good in crowded areas.

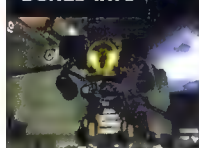


↑ Battlesuits can get creamed easily. Stay out of sight.



↑ Tanks won't last long against PPC-equipped mechs.

Bonus info



POWER UPS

After you destroy a mech (and avoid the ensuing blast wave), it'll leave behind power-ups and ammo top-ups for your weapons. These glowing power-ups can also be found by destroying select buildings, so stay on the look-out!

» an enemy mech, punch in a key code to eject the pilot, rendering the mech empty and yours for the taking. There aren't many compelling reasons to mech-jack in single-player mode, but in multiplayer it's a game-winning strategy.

MechAssault 2 is incredible to look at. While the gameplay might not be mind-blowing, the visual eye candy on offer certainly is – just look at these screens. Everything from explosions to weapons powering up is awesome. You'll be hard pressed to find a prettier game, and it's a great example of a developer squeezing every last drop of juice out of the world's most powerful console. We'd love to see how other consoles would manage this, but as it's a Microsoft-developed product, it's exclusive to us lucky Xbox owners.

Despite the visual beauty, a few aspects of *MechAssault 2*'s design will grate with long-time fans of the franchise. Newcomers will undoubtedly appreciate how easy it is to jump straight into a mech and start shooting, but they'll eventually come to the realisation that the shoot 'em up action is only skin deep. There's no option to

customise the weapons or create weapon groupings – you're stuck with what you're given and you can only fire one type of weapon at a time. Worse still, the targeting system is so generic that it's not possible to specifically aim at an enemy's arm, head, rocket launcher or leg. As long as it's red, it makes no difference where you point your reticule.

Wouldn't it have been great to be able to do those things, though? Imagine strategically knocking out an enemy's PPCs, or deliberately crippling torso to reduce its turning ability. These ideas aren't so far fetched if you've ever played the original *Mechwarrior* games on PC; and if you have played the old *Mechwarrior* games, you'll also notice that *MechAssault 2* does not feature any kind of heat management, which forces players to use their weapons more wisely.

The *Mechwarrior* concept has essentially been dumbed down for *MechAssault 2* and it hasn't done the game any favours. Features like weapon customisation, heat and even weight management would've given so much more depth to the game,

depth that would've equated to more strategy and greater longevity. It's not as though such features would turn off the casual audience either – racing simulations often have the option of switching the driving aids on and off, just as *Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic* did with its character management system. In other words, *MechAssault 2* should've given players the option to delve even deeper into the game.

Happily, it doesn't really affect how frighteningly good *MechAssault 2* is at eating up your hours as you run rings around your friends and blast them into the dirt. The single-player campaign barely explores the idea of being able to jump out of your cockpit and into any other mech, tank or mounted cannon, but in multiplayer it blossoms into a brilliantly dynamic skirmish that will become the preferred mode of play.

Will you risk being bot-stomped just so you can get into the nearby airborne vehicle? Will you risk getting fragged by friendly fire as you attempt a mech-jack? The triumphs and humiliations that come from these decisions are a joy that only

Mechs Go Wild Online

XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED

THE ORIGINAL was a surprise hit online and there are ten very different game modes to be played over Live, System Link and split-screen.

1



↑ Modes include Grinder, Destruction, Last Man Standing, Not It, Snatch It and Check It.

2



↑ Next issue we've got a Live-enabled MechAssault 2 playable demo (see page 113)!



↑ Picking a new mech to stomp around in is a bit like going to a showroom to buy a new car.



↑ Snow doesn't affect your mech, but deep water does. Steer clear.

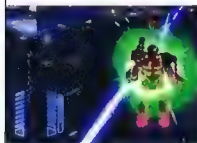


↑ Your Battle Armour is no match for a mech's awesome firepower.

Bonus info

CIRCLE IN THE SAND

Mechs aren't the most agile things ever to fire big guns. And when playing the game against a mate, it all tends to come down to who can circle strafe the best. Ballroom-dancing mechs?



"The game's designed to keep the action levels high - all the time"

» you and your friends can provide. There are ten game modes to take part in through split-screen, System Link and Xbox Live. They include classics like Base War, Destruction (aka deathmatch) and Team Destruction, as well as more contemporary checkpoint battles in the *Battlefield 1942* vein like Check It.

There's also Conquest mode, which lets players battle it out across 40 star systems. At the time of this writing, Conquest mode wasn't available for us to test and we would've loved to see how far it goes. Either way, it means players must have Xbox Live to take full advantage of *MechAssault 2*'s multiplayer functions, which is a bit of a shame since it means the majority of Xbox owners in Australia will have to miss out.

This might be forgivable if *MechAssault 2* had a decent single-player campaign, but the painful truth

is that it doesn't. It's a weekend at best, with not much of a story to follow and a fairly predictable string of "kill all the red dots on your radar" missions.

We're not sure it's a completely polished game either. In some levels, we spent ages running around on foot across entire levels in search of a new mech to pilot, all the while avoiding the enemy mechs stomping around us. In another level, we had to defend a radar from an onslaught of mechs and tanks with one measly gun turret. We're absolutely convinced that there should've been a mech placed nearby for us to hop into, meaning either the game is buggy or the development team was so sloppy that they forgot to include »



Bonus info

MATES' RATES

Don't have access to System Link games or the mighty Xbox Live? Don't worry, the game comes with plenty of options for split-screen



fun. Just plug in a second controller and get a mate round your place for some head-to-head action.

WHO AM I?

Before you fire up the campaign mode or multiplayer mode for the first time, you need to create a profile. Here



you get to pick your character from four (male or female) and customise the colour of your armour. This then goes on to become your online identity when playing over Xbox Live.

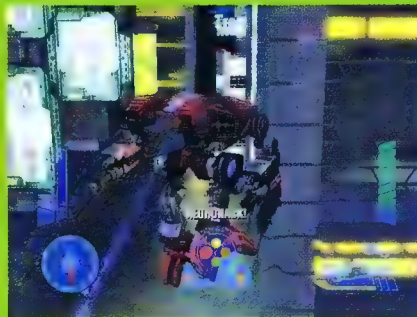
HEAVY METAL LIVES

Throughout the single-player campaign mode, the action is backed up by perm-fuelled American rock music. It's fun to start off with but the grinding guitars and ear-piercing vocals soon begin to get on your nerves, no matter how much you love good old metal.

TAXI FOR ONE Stuck for a ride? Then grab the nearest mech and attack



↑ Is that mech bigger than yours? Jump on it and smash your metal arm through its hull.



↑ All you have to do now is follow the Simon Says-style puzzle to eject the pilot out of his ride.



↑ Now the mech's free to do whatever you tell it to. Jump in and check out its big guns.



↑ This big golf ball is your HQ - protect it at all times from impending mech doom.



↑ Press X in the tank to zoom in.



↑ No armour at all is a bit like being naked.



↑ Just look at all that action going on in a single screenshot.

» them. Or maybe they thought it'd be funny for us to go through the frustration of dying several dozen times on a poorly designed level or two before working through what's otherwise a fairly easy campaign. Whatever the explanation is, *MechAssault 2* can't boast about its single-player mode - it's ultimately a multiplayer driven game.

If you're a fan of the original *MechAssault*, prepare for a healthy serve of a slightly improved

bot-blaster with vastly superior multiplayer options. It also helps a great deal if you're equipped with the means to play multiplayer via System Link or Xbox Live. *MechAssault 2* doesn't have any of the added combat options that made its sim-style predecessors great, but if you like your action constant and great to look at without taxing your brain with too many details, you won't go wrong with this game.

The Summary

MECHASSAULT 2: LONE WOLF THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- 1 Sounds, looks and feels all too similar to the original; the series hasn't moved on enough.
- 2 A host of multiplayer options will keep you stomping after the single-player game's dealt with.
- 3 Fully destructible environments combined with mega-powerful weapons make for a great experience.
- 4 Ability to jump in and out of mechs as well as steal them from other players adds a new dimension.
- 5 Multiplayer is this game's greatest strength. The single-player mode is mostly forgettable.

The Verdict

A visual feast of spectacular effects and non-stop action that's too easy on the brain for its own good.

8.1/10

PREVIOUSLY: Feature - Issue 27, Incoming - Issue 30
COMING SOON: Hints and cheats



↑ Assume the roles of a number of different characters for the ultimate surprise attack.

Scrapland

The master of madness creates a land of make believe



↑ This robot's got legs like a plane's landing gear.

Words: Andy Irving

Dev: Mercuryteam	Pub: Deep Silver
Players: 1; 2 Split	Live: None
Release: 28 January	
www.scrapland.com	

HAVE YOU EVER woken up from a twisted nightmare, thankful it was only a dream? American McGee has those sorts of dreams, only he uses them to put an alternative spin on children's classic stories. Just look out for the upcoming game and movie tie-in *Oz* for proof. Taking the lead producer's role of *Scrapland* was no easy feat, yet although the game is a somewhat tamer tale, the end result is still a characteristically comical affair.

Scrapland has been bandied about in the press as a sort of 'GTA in space', and there are some striking similarities. First and foremost is the free-roaming nature of the game. Now don't get us wrong, the sleek and sexy cityscape would no way give *San Andreas* a run for its money in terms of



↑ Become a cop-bot and blend in with the Force.

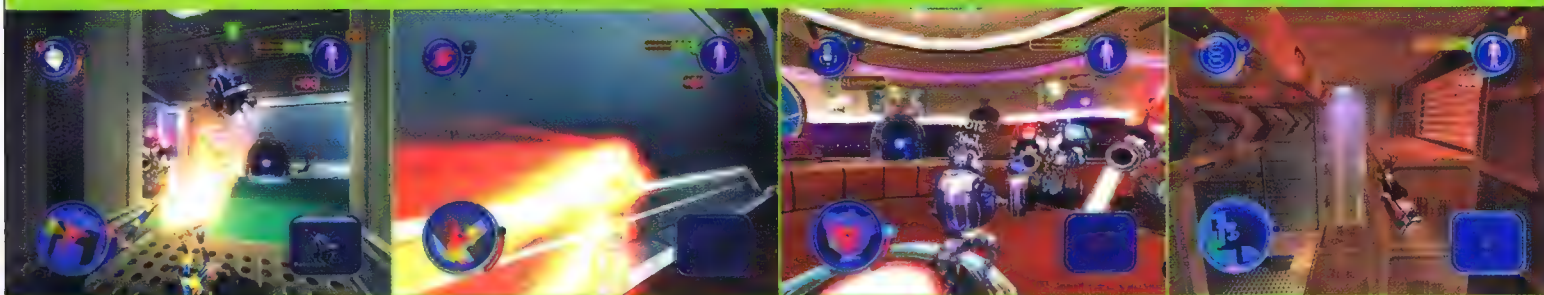
environmental interaction or sheer scale. What it does have in its favour however, are stunning visuals. Lush, futuristic buildings ascend into a fantastic, asteroid-littered space panoramic, and the vibrant environments are alive with hundreds of inhabitants and explosive police chases.

Scrapland is a planet inhabited solely by robots. Their world was decimated by humans, so they've rebuilt it from scrap. As a result, humans (or anything organic) are outlawed. But the Mayor of governing city Chimera has now been found dead, and it's up to you as lead character D-Tritus (super-sleuth/reporter scum) to gather clues as to whom the murderer could be.

Gameplay is a weird hybrid of mission-based actioner and free-roaming adventure. There's a massive number of characters to interact with, and thousands of lines of spoken dialogue. Because every type of robot inhabiting the city is logged in the divine Great Database, D-Tritus can hack into all of them from any one of the ports dotted around each location. Big D can assume one of the 15

SPLIT-PERSONALITY Be the ghost in someone else's machine

IT'S OFTEN NECESSARY to assume the form of another of Chimera's inhabitants to enter various areas, obtain the information you need, or to perform certain tasks. The robots whose identities you take on all have different skills and abilities, so be sure to make the most of what you tap into!

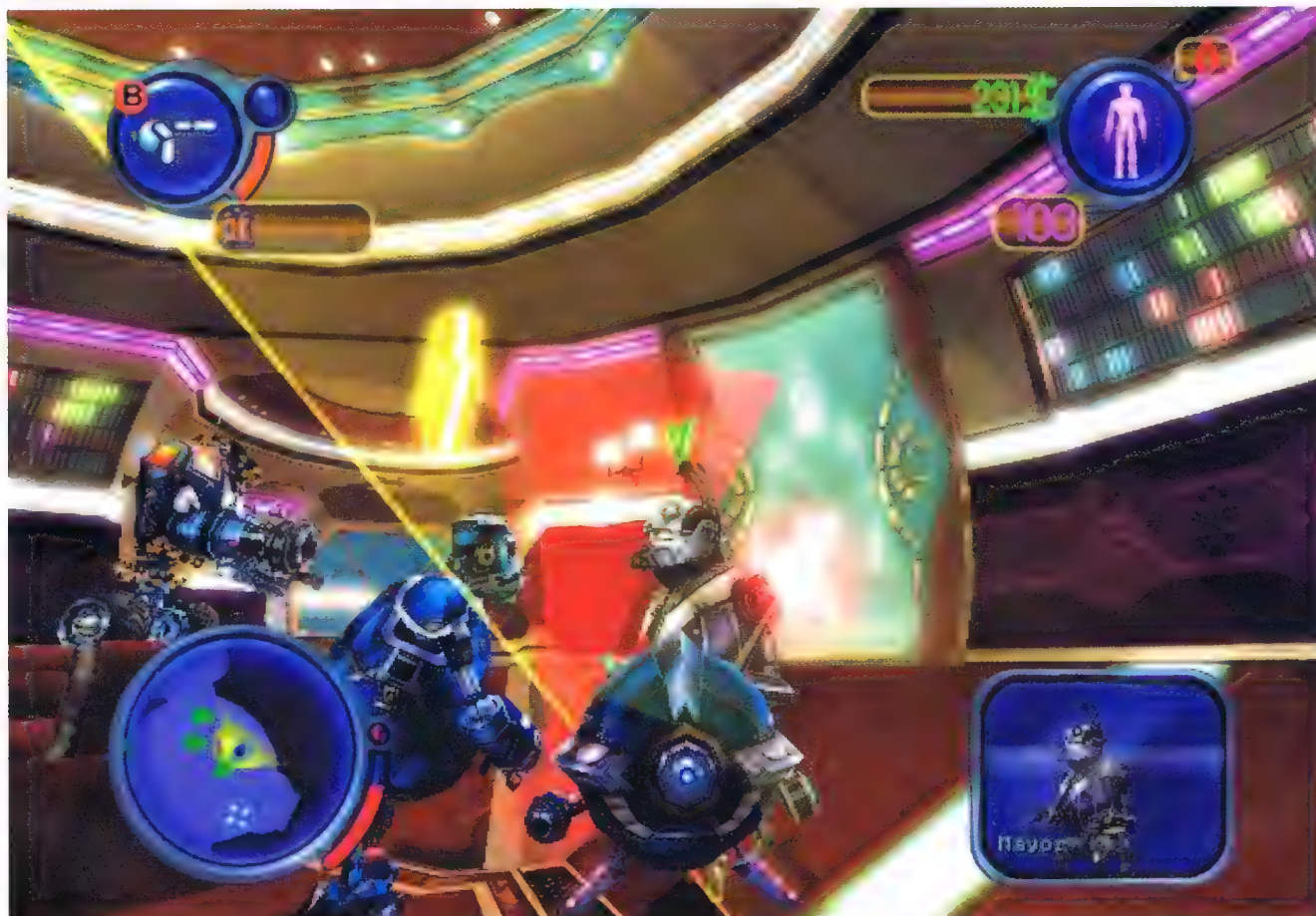


↑ Bertie emits a blinding flash of light from his stomach, stunning enemies.

↑ D-Tritus can cut through robots with ease. Great for getting out of a tight spot.

↑ The Mayor will lecture everyone around him, momentarily sending them to sleep.

↑ This feisty little Stapler can leap great heights. A Get Out of jail card, literally.



↑ A yellow arrow marks the spot, or the person, you should look up info on.

Bonus info

GOB A JOB

On his arrival on Scrapland, D-Tritus is assigned employment. After cycling through all the lowliest jobs on offer (the robot version of a toilet cleaner included), D is finally awarded the role of Journalist. Is that a sly dig on McGee's part at some of his critics?



TAKE ON ME

If you can't get to a Database terminal in time, Tritus can assume the role of any robot in the vicinity. Simply move until they're in your viewer, then tap Y. However, be aware that this will alert the authorities to your presence and drain your energy.

"Both mission-based actioner and free-roaming adventure"

» types of robot available (they're an inbred lot). Each has different functions or special attacks (see Split-Personality, above), giving countless different ways of completing missions.

But there is a flipside to changing your image more than Madonna. Beholders, little flying snitch bitches of the police, are quick to point you out if they see you filling another's mechanical shoes. It's illegal, so do it away from the watchful gaze of their scanners, as denoted on your handy little radar.

Get caught, and just like an annoying punk kid, they'll get their bigger brothers. Though slower and thicker, they pack a punch that's actually worth worrying about. It's here that *Scrapland* suffers its first short circuit. Sure it's fun swapping identities left, right and centre, but the Beholders will always eventually suss you as an impostor. Far more

satisfying is to become a Beholder yourself and accuse a robot that needs assassinating, letting the heavy boys roll in and do their worst.

It's not actually possible to 'die' as such in *Scrapland*. After getting obliterated for the umpteenth time by persistent police, D-Tritus invariably ends up in the slammer. Escape is monotonously simple – take over the form of a little Stapler that appears in your cell, evade patrolling police and escape out of convenient tunnels. Although not a difficult task, it does quickly become tiresome as it takes five minutes to get to where you were before.

The more exciting aspects of the game occur during the ship-racing and combat missions.



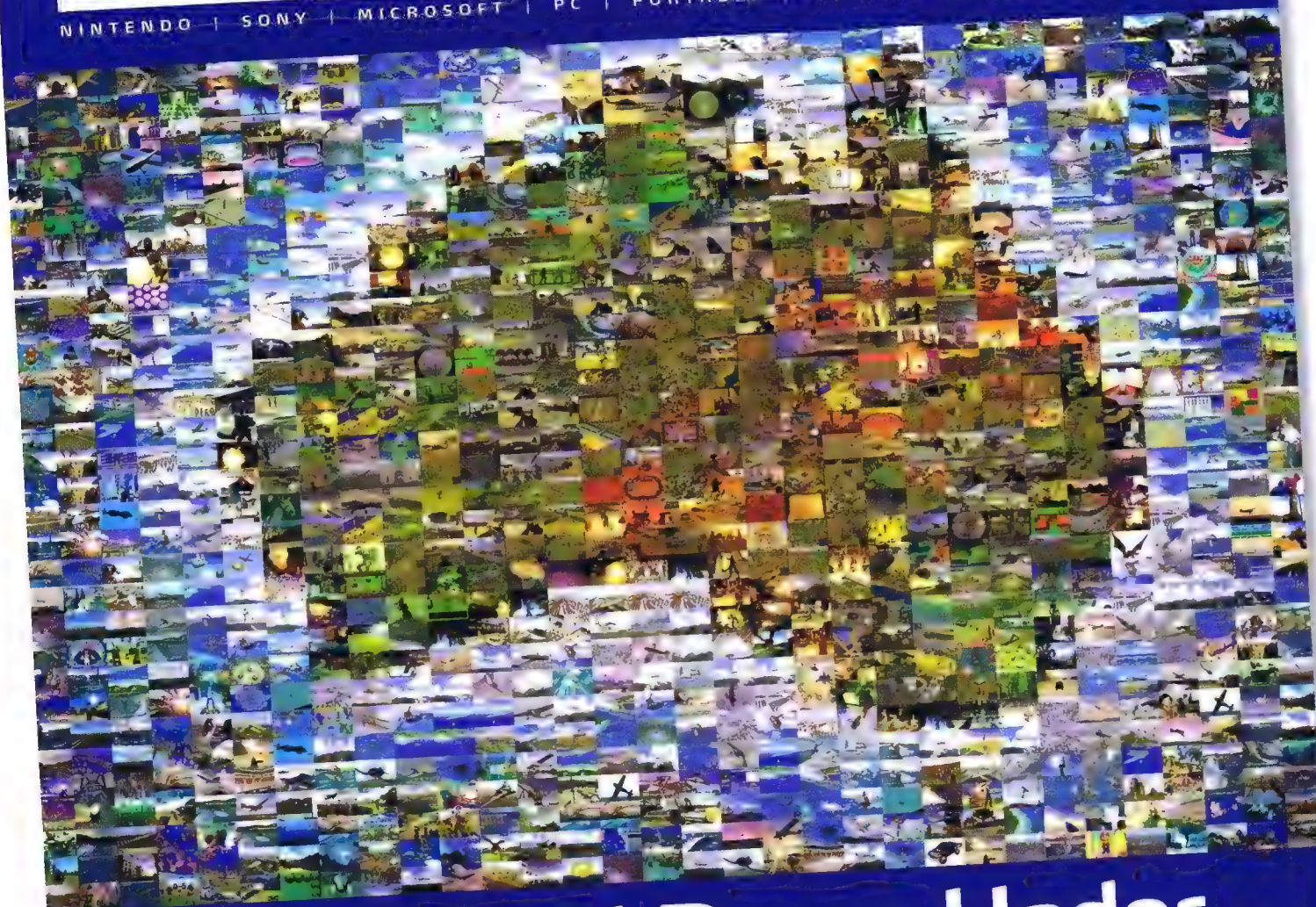
↑ Compete in the space race with a friend in the split-screen mode.

VIDEOGAME CULTURE

JAN/FEB 2005 \$8.95

EDGE®

NINTENDO | SONY | MICROSOFT | PC | PORTABLE | COIN-OP | SET-TOP | ONLINE



Developed Down Under

Why the videogaming world wants a piece of Australia

PREVIEWED BROTHERS IN ARMS **SHADOW OF ROME** THE PUNISHER **STEAMBOY** SAMURAI WESTERN **IMPERIAL GLORY**
REVIEWED WORLD OF WARCRAFT **GOLDENEYE: ROGUE** AGENT GHOST RECON 2 **PRINCE OF PERSIA 2**

ON SALE NOW!



↑ Build your own spacecraft and take to the airways for some target practice.

» Race for cash, race to complete a mission, or just race for fun; there's a ton of different excuses to zip round tracks collecting holographic buoys. It's illegal to physically destroy fellow competitors, but your ships are equipped with a handy electrical whip (See Get Over Here, below). Although tricky to master, once you do you'll be leapfrogging the competition in no time, though watch out for your fellow racers as they can do the same to you. Whilst the races are enjoyable, you don't get much of a feeling of speed, due to the fairly sluggish nature



"Race for cash, race to complete a mission, or just race for fun"

of your ships. The controls are default inverted and can't be changed, either. That said, you can build your own custom ships. Each ship requires plans which are teasingly difficult to discover, spread out all over Chimera. Once you've acquired the blueprints, head back to your trusty pal Rusty's Scrapyard and get to work. Choose the engine size and weapon upgrades, though your choices are limited by the amount of cash in your stash. There are tons of ships available, each useful in different ways. Beef up the engines of the more lightweight craft, and they'll blitz round the track like a greyhound on a promise. Toughen up your artillery and you'll be unstoppable on combat missions. Most of the ships still handle very similarly though, and it's a chore to keep trekking back to your garage to swap vehicles. There are a load of different sub-missions available, though once again these are limited to increasingly faster races – a shame, considering the amount of characters on offer that have gone unexploited.

The game features a rip-roaring multiplayer mode, using all the ships from the single-player



↑ Who can build the ship with the biggest guns?



↑ Speak no evil and you'll be shown the way.

Bonus info

HARD TO SWALLOW

A mysterious assistant who seems to know just enough to teasingly lead you to the next clue guides you through the game. In a nod to one of our favourite films of all time, the character is called Deep Throat.

TOOBIN' IT

Navigating between each area of the City would take absolutely ages, so thankfully you can park up at any of the Tubular Transport stops and zip between locations. Very handy.

REPEL REBEL

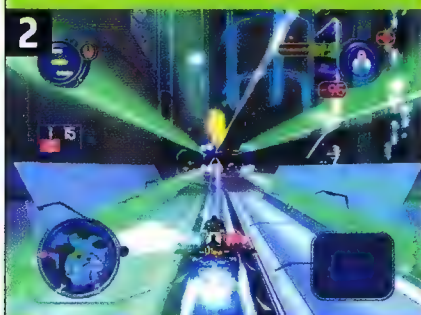
Every type of ammo you pick up for your ship (and which your enemies use) has a specific counter-attack that is brutally powerful if you manage to time it just right.

GET OVER HERE

The races are whip-crackingly good fun



↑ We're lagging behind and need a bit of a boost, but our Nitro is recharging.



↑ Use your Electro whip to lasso an opponent up ahead and bring yourself up to speed.



↑ If she got any thinner she'd fall through a grid!

The Summary

SCRAPLAND THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- 1 An epic, science-fiction adventure that's like nothing we've seen on Xbox. Unique and absorbing.
- 2 Gorgeous-looking environments provide a substantial area to explore, and are brimming with interactive characters.
- 3 Fun adventuring is complemented by a great variety of gameplay, though players often overlook the underlying stealth notion.
- 4 Reasonably exciting ship-to-ship combat and racing, with loads of custom craft on offer, though awkward controls will infuriate.
- 5 An online-enabled, substantial multiplayer was promised, though what was delivered was two-player split-screen. We're disappointed.

The Verdict

An entertaining adventure, massive in scale and with the characteristic McGee twist. Multiplayer is a letdown, though.

8.0/10

PREVIOUSLY: First Look - Issue 35, Incoming - Issue 37
COMING SOON: Hints - Issue 39

ESPN NHL 2K5

What's cooler than being cool? Getting your face smashed on an ice rink

Dev: Visual Concepts	Pub: Take-Two
Players 1: 2-4 Split	Live: None
Release: January	
www.espnvideogames.com/nhl2k5	

Words: Graeme Boyd

IF YOU'VE EVER seen the OXM five-a-side footy team play, you'll know we love a bit of a scrap with our sport. That's why ice hockey is possibly the greatest game ever invented. The refs don't even break up two brawling players until someone's brains are defrosting the ice.

Fighting is the best thing about hockey, and ESPN NHL 2K5 knows it. A totally redesigned fighting engine gives you total freedom to skate around your opponent, then smack his chin with an uppercut. It's not *Mortal Kombat* but it's more fun than the usual button-bashing hockey scraps.

Okay, it's not all punch-ups. You have to rough your opponents up *before* you start chucking fists. Luckily NHL 2K5 has also introduced the brilliant Full Stick Control, which lets you sneakily wallop your opponent by tweaking the Right analogue stick in his direction.

If you prefer to concentrate on actually playing, NHL 2K5 won't disappoint. While the action remains faster and more arcadey than EA's yearly offering, 2K5's defensive controls have been buffed up. The Full Stick system gives you more options against an oncoming attacker, and you can hold the Left trigger to skate backwards. Spine-shattering



↑ Zoom in on your proudest moments.

checks are easy to pull off and it's a lot easier to score than in most hockey games. Purists might get sniffy but NHL 2K5's face-breaking hockey definitely makes for a more enjoyable experience.

Like the other ESPN games there's a stack of additional features to enjoy. The Franchise mode offers plenty of long-term appeal but, as with NBA 2K5 and NFL 2K5, the online options have been dropped. But considering how much hard-hitting hockey action you're getting for the budget price, NHL 2K5 isn't just cool, it's ice cold.

Bonus info

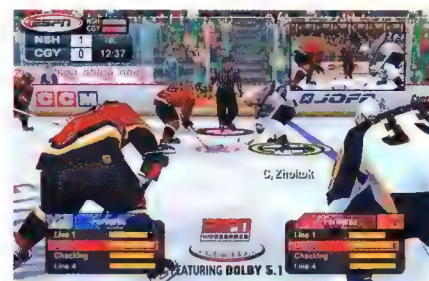
HOCKEY DOKEY

Enjoy a break from the ice and play an air hockey mini-game. The Left stick moves the paddle and the 'clack' sound effects take us back to wasted days at the Mega Bowl.



↑ The visuals are so crisp you can feel the chill.

"Spine-shattering checks are easy to pull off"



↑ The ESPN presentation is superb.

The Verdict

Not as realistic as its NBA and NFL brothers, but slapshots you in the face with fun to make up for it.

8.3/10

ESPN NFL 2K5

Takes on Madden at his own game

Dev: Visual Concepts	Pub: Take-Two
Players 1: 2-4 split	Live: None
Release: 14 January	
www.espnvideogames.com/nfl2k5	

Words: Graeme Boyd

HOW GOOD ARE you at sports games? Ever wondered just how predictable your decisions are, or if your range of tactics keeps your opponents guessing?

ESPN NFL 2K5's got the answers. In a display of genius that would explode our brains if we even tried to understand it, NFL 2K5's VIP feature tracks exactly how you play and develops a scarily accurate AI representation of your skills. You can then play against *yourself* to discover your own strengths and weaknesses. Mental.

It's just one of many awesome features that should seduce long-time fans of EA's Madden NFL series. If you're not convinced, the bargain price of \$49.95 should seal the deal.

Things have certainly been tightened up since last year's effort. While 2K4 favoured fast, arcadey action, 2K5 requires a little more thought when selecting plays and a little more skill in executing them. The running game in particular is much more realistic, with most ground attacks getting instantly stuffed unless you keep a close eye on your opponent's brutal defensive line. The same goes for passing - coverage is tighter so you really have to bullet the ball into your receiver's hands at exactly the right moment.

It makes for a deeper and more satisfying American football experience that suddenly rivals the added complexity Madden always enjoyed. But there's more: an extensive Franchise mode, the fun Crib mode where you decorate a huge mansion with unlockable furniture (think MTV's *Cribs* meets *The Sims*), and the 25th Anniversary mode that lets you replay some of the all-time greatest moments from American football history. Once again, the only drawback is that all the online modes featured in the US release have been pulled from the PAL version. It's a disappointment, but you still get plenty of bang for not much buck.



↑ The in-game visuals are phenomenal, especially during replays.



↑ The TV-style coverage keeps you up to date with the stats.



↑ The AI defence is much tougher than last year.

The Verdict

Packing loads of features for the price, NFL 2K5 hits with the intensity of a 300-pound linebacker. Watch out, Madden.

8.6/10



PC Games Addict For when it's more than a habit

REVIEWS, PREVIEWS, HARDWARE, NEWS, DEMOS & MORE

On Sale Now

ESPN NBA 2K5

Bringing it strong, bringing it slick, bringing it... cheap

Words: Graeme Boyd

Dev: Visual Concepts	Pub: Take-Two
Players 1: 2-4 Split	Live: None
Release: Jan 05	
www.espnvideogames.com/nba2k5	

BASKETBALL COMMENTATORS talk a lot about 'dynasties'. Larry Bird's Celtics, Michael Jordan's Bulls, Shaq's Lakers - teams that spanked everything that came their way.

EA has had a similar thing going with its American sports games. For years now it's owned the playing field. If Sega's *ESPN* games were to compete - to bust open the dynasty - they needed something special. Like a fat price cut.

When the 2005 range of *ESPN* games including *NBA 2K5* hit the US earlier this year they had a mere \$20 price tag. Sales rocketed, EA started sweating. Now we're getting the benefit - you'll be able to pick up any of the *ESPN* games (check out *ESPN NFL 2K5* and *ESPN NHL 2K5* opposite) in Australia for \$49.95.

But hold on. Surely the price reflects the quality of the game? Hell, no. Picking up *ESPN NBA 2K5* for fifty bucks is like signing Kobe Bryant on a free transfer: the bargain of the century.

To top off you've got a fantastic-looking, fast-paced simulation of b-ball absolutely rippling with run-and-gun action. Thanks to the *ESPN* licence the TV-style presentation is top-notch and the superb commentary puts *FIFA* and *Pro Evo* to shame.

But it doesn't just look good. The movement controls are tighter than a cheerleader's butt cheeks and you can bust out sweet, ankle-breaking

special moves like crossovers and spins with slick flicks of the Right thumbstick.

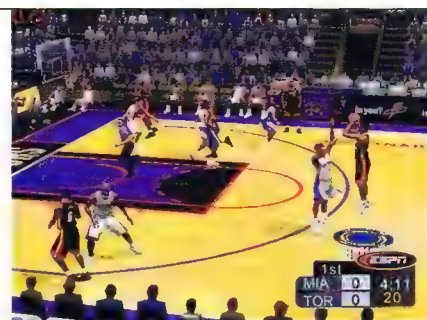
It all feels smooth and effortlessly realistic. Whether you're posting up with a towering seven-footer, launching a three-pointer from deep or throwing down a rim-rocking dunk, *NBA 2K5* always seems to know what you want to do and translates it into beautifully fluid animations.

The AI's solid, although your own team-mates do tend to stand around a little too much rather than opening up lanes and driving towards the basket. It's cool, though: you can call a huge selection of preset plays on the fly by pressing the D-pad, turning your offence into an instantly adaptable weapon.

This strategic side really comes together in *NBA 2K5*'s Association mode. You're placed in charge of an entire NBA franchise: you have to handle business in the office as well as on the court. Picking the team, choosing the playbook, keeping your players happy and winning games is all down to you. It's a great way to get a little deeper into the experience and definitely extends *2K5*'s life.

The catch? Well, it's either a major flaw or a tiny irritation depending on whether you're hooked up to Live or not - the online options have been yanked from the PAL version. It's a shame, especially when online leagues and tournaments would have been the perfect addition to the single-player game, but considering the pricepoint it doesn't really harm the overall appeal of *NBA 2K5*.

All in all it's a fantastic package, especially at this price. Taking on the might of EA's basketball dynasty was like throwing up an off-balance shot from deep in three-point range, but *ESPN NBA 2K5* hits nothing but net.



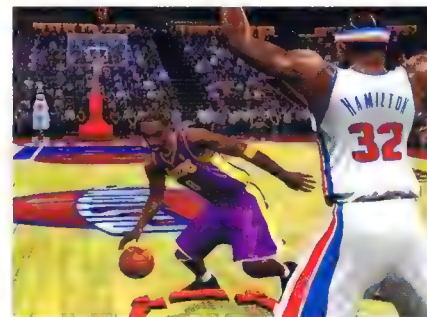
↑ The opposition's defence is pretty tight.



↑ Shooting free throws can be tricky.



↑ You can play streetball with the pro players.



↑ Bust out killer crossovers.



↑ Posting up your big men is as easy as holding the Left trigger and using some muscle.

Bonus info



24/7, 365

As if *NBA* and *Streetball* play modes weren't enough, *NBA 2K5* also offers the 24/7 mode. Here you create your own 'baller and build his reputation by touring the US and getting ill with your skills against pros. Ignore your player for a few days and his skills will deteriorate - you snooze, you lose.

The Summary

ESPN NBA 2K5 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- 1 Comes to the court with a huge list of features. Puts many sports games that sell for twice as much to shame.
- 2 Fast, intuitive and fun b-ball action that will satisfy high-speed showboaters and hoop tacticians alike.
- 3 Stellar presentation that's slicker than Shaq's sweaty nugget, with all the over-the-top commentary you'd ever want.
- 4 The Association mode adds a long-term challenge and balances the action with some satisfying strategy.
- 5 The lack of Live options in the PAL version is a disappointment, but for this price we're not grumbling.

The Verdict

NBA 2K5 got all the teams, players, flashy presentation and hoop gameplay - for half the price. You do the maths.

8.9/10

PREVIOUS: Just bounced into view
COMING SOON: Hints - Issue 39

HURRY!!! VOTE NOW

HIT THE **RED** BUTTON ON YOUR FOXTEL DIGITAL REMOTE
OR GO TO MTV.COM.AU/AVMA OR SMS VOTE TO 19 30 30

VOTE
MTV



LIVE ON MTV

6PM MARCH 3RD, 2005

NOMINATIONS

BEST MALE ARTIST
EMINEM
ROBBIE WILLIAMS
SHANNON NOLL
USHER

BEST FEMALE ARTIST
GWEN STEFANI
BRITNEY SPEARS
MISSY HIGGINS
DELTA GOODREM

BEST GROUP
OUTKAST
GREEN DAY
JET
POWDERFINGER

BEST BREAKTHROUGH ARTIST
MAROONS
MISSY HIGGINS
FRANZ FERDINAND
THIRSTY MERC

BEST DANCE VIDEO
TOXIC. BRITNEY SPEARS
SLASHDOTDASH. FATBOY SLIM
PUSH UP. FREESTYLERS
YEAH. USHER

BEST POP VIDEO
PIECES OF ME. ASHLEE SIMPSON
OUT OF THE BLUE. DELTA GOODREM
OUT WITH MY BABY. GUY SEBASTIAN
WHAT YOU WAITING FOR. GWEN STEFANI

BEST ROCK VIDEO
AMERICAN IDIOT. GREEN DAY
COLD HARD BITCH. JET
BLACK BETTY. SPIDERBAIT
VERTIGO. U2

BEST R&B VIDEO
NAUGHTY GIRL. BEYONCE
HEY MAMA. BLACK EYED PEAS
LUV-YA. J-WESS
RADIO. ROBBIE WILLIAMS

SEXIEST VIDEO
NAUGHTY GIRL. BEYONCE
HEY MAMA. BLACK EYED PEAS
TOXIC. BRITNEY SPEARS
RADIO. ROBBIE WILLIAMS

BEST DRESSED VIDEO
OUT OF THE BLUE. DELTA GOODREM
WHAT YOU WAITING FOR. GWEN STEFANI
CHOCOLATE. KYLIE MINOGUE
ROSES. OUTKAST

MTV AVMA VIDEO OF THE YEAR 2005
SOMEWHERE DOWN THE BARREL. DISSOCIATIVES
JUST LOSE IT. EMINEM
WHAT YOU WAITING FOR. GWEN STEFANI
ROSES. OUTKAST

VOTING CLOSSES FEB 14TH

FOXTEL
CHANNEL 45

AUSTAR
DIGITAL
132 342

FOXTEL
DIGITAL
CALL 1300 FOXTEL

CHANNEL 808

OPTUSTV
CHANNEL 22





Outlaw Golf 2

The OG of alternative sports titles sticks it to the establishment once again

Bonus info



SINKING YOUR BALLS

Putting is a tricky skill to master. Bring up a grid to see the lie of the green, and then tap X to see the expected trajectory of your ball. Position the cursor accordingly, then check your ball's path again. Be careful as you only get three chances to do this.

Words: Andy Irving

Dev: Hypnotix	Pub: Take-Two
Players 1-4	Live: 2-4 players
Release: Jan 05	
www.globalstarsoftware.com/outlawgolf2	

GOLF AND TRAILER trash. As unlikely a combination as peanut butter and jam, but *Outlaw Golf 2* fuses the two with reckless abandon. The first OG (not Vanilla Ice, although his alter ego Ice Trey does feature here) was a reasonably fun arcade golf sim that featured the ability to beat up your caddy. The sequel brings with it with a John Daly-sized quota of enjoyable characters and game modes. Ten pairs of swingers (we'd like to say of the fairway kind, but we're not quite so sure) are available, each with different attributes. The number of courses has been upped from three to eight, and although the new additions are typically wacky, they quickly become tiresome.

Players can build up their stats in one of the brilliant mini-games. Head to the driving range and chalk up some serious length, or chip balls into



↑ She's not interested in his golfing knowledge.

buckets to add points to your distance, accuracy and composure abilities. These are fun but nothing compared to the more zany mini-games on offer. Lob exploding golf balls at a herd of cows, for example, or jump your custom cart through hoops and, in wickedly fun GTA style, run down as many spectators as you can within a time limit.

This leftfield take on the sport continues in the main game. Aside from all the regular (read: boring) modes like Stroke and Matchplay are the more interesting Casino and Vegas modes (betting against competitors) and Pick Up Sticks, where players get the chance to steal clubs from an opponent's bag. So far, so *Tiger Woods 2005* (Issue 33, 8.7). But this is where one of OG2's many inconsistencies arises. At the end of the day it's golf. Arcadey golf, granted, but golf all the same. The *Tiger* series heads Xbox's leaderboard by a million miles, and OG2's reliance on a power meter for your swing feels accessible but positively outdated. Putting spin on your ball is nigh-on impossible, resulting in some infuriating results when trying to chip or drive onto a green that's bouncier than Anna Nicole at the latest awards ceremony. You can hand pick clubs, adding depth to the game, but what's the point when it's coupled with a very simple golfing engine?

Your Composure meter will fluctuate between In The Zone and In The Gutter. If you're feeling blue, use one of the tokens you've earned from sinking a Birdie or playing well. Tap Y and select a timed Cart Challenge or Beatings. The latter, one of the more fun parts of the first game (Issue 10, 7.4), has been simplified, and it's now a mere case of pushing a five-button sequence at the appropriate time, with disappointingly bland, pre-scripted results.

The inclusion of Xbox Live will go some way to broadening OG2's appeal, though like a confused, shaven-headed, cross-dressing boomer boy, this title struggles to find a real identity. Fun for a few hours, but only multiplayer will really give OG2 the length it thinks it deserves.



↑ The Scooby Doo gang were tearaways as kids.



↑ Beating up your caddy can be smashing fun.



↑ Look at those peaks. She must be freezing...



↑ Hit icons at the right time to dish out beatings.

The Summary

OUTLAW GOLF 2 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- 1 A fun, alternative spin on golf games with suitably colourful characters to boot and five additional crazy courses.
- 2 The violent beatings return, though aren't as satisfying to pull off. Cart challenges are a lot more fun.
- 3 A frustratingly simplistic golf engine nullifies any depth added by precision club selection. Which is a shame.
- 4 Commentary is amusing and littered with risqué double entendres, though a limited variety means it quickly gets repetitive.
- 5 Tons of assorted game modes make multiplayer a real laugh, and the addition of Live play will turn the online airwaves blue in no time.

The Verdict

Accomplished arcade sports for the Golf Punk generation. Fun, but limited courses, gameplay and characters limit longevity.

7.0/10

It chipped onto our laps from right down the release fairway
Hints & cheats



Syberia II

They didn't find Syberia in the first game. Will they have more luck this time?

Bonus info

WORK, DAMMIT!

Amongst the most annoying sections are the trial and error machine activation puzzles. These are solvable through a blend of guesswork and utter luck, as you flick switches, press buttons or push panels until you stumble upon/ work out the right combination to make said contraption do what it's supposed to.

Words: Martin Korda

Dev: Microids	Pub: Microids
Players 1	Live: None
Release: Out Now	
http://syberia2-game.com/syberia2/english	

AS ADVENTURE games go, *Syberia II* is hardly groundbreaking. Almost identical in look and feel to its excellent PC/PS2 predecessor, it picks up the story of New York lawyer Kate Walker (that's you by the way) and the stereotypically eccentric shock-haired inventor Hans Voralberg, who's looking for the mystical woolly mammoth-inhabited island of Syberia which, he claims, is somewhere north of Russia.

Hoping desperately that the old loon isn't just suffering from a chronic bout of senile dementia,

you set off by train to help him look for this so-called glacial paradise, stopping off at a series of rather isolated and often slightly sinister locations along the way.

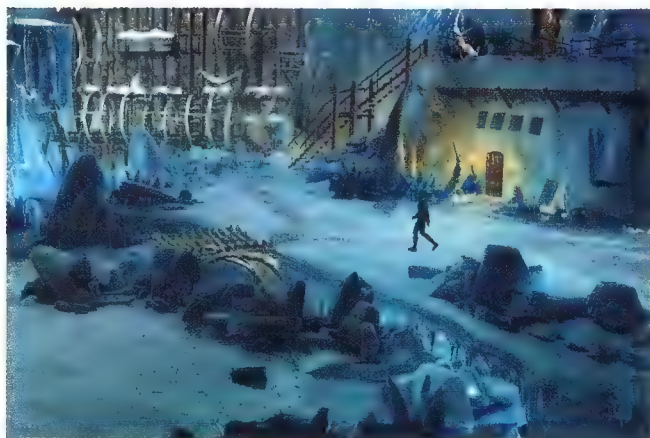
Each area is packed full of brain-teasing puzzles. These usually charge you with wandering around, interacting with colourful though badly acted characters and finding objects – some of which are harder to track down than a virgin porn star – that can be used to solve each problem.

Sadly, the quality of the puzzles falls well short of the first game's superbly crafted conundrums, with many feeling rather arbitrary and subsequently too detached from the main thrust of the story.

The plot also fails to impress, and never manages to reach the magical heights of *Syberia*'s captivating yarn, at times feeling like a poor man's Tim Burton movie on acid. However, there's still just about enough quality shining through to make you want to push onto the next part of the game.

Syberia II teems with fairly attractive and intelligently imagined locales, though taking in the sights is made unnecessarily clumsy thanks to some hideously unresponsive controls and ludicrous movement restrictions. Kate might be able to tell you what a Deposition is, but ask her to walk over a tree root and she'll display the intelligence of a professional halfwit. Who dropped out of school. When they were six.

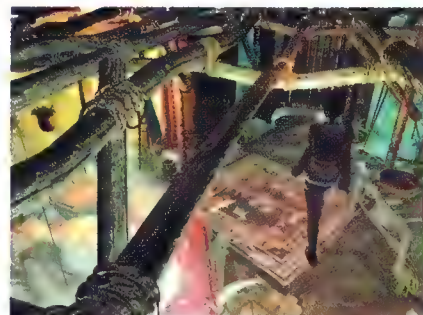
Ultimately, this is the type of game that'll probably only appeal to a select few. If you're after a slow-paced, puzzle-packed experience with a half-decent story and plenty of characters with which to converse and interact, then *Syberia II* is just about worth a look, especially if you've played its superior predecessor and want to know how the story ends. But if you prefer more bang for your buck, then we suggest sticking with *Halo 2* (Issue 34, 10.0), *Star Wars KOTOR II* (Issue 36, 9.3) and reputable Kings Cross brothels instead.



↑ Looks like someone was hungry...



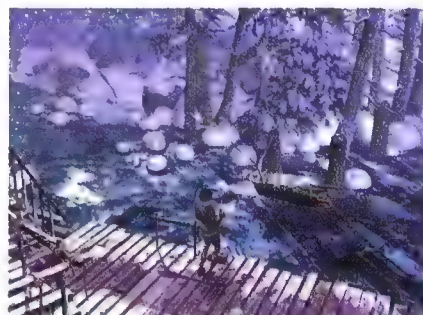
↑ The train isn't your only mode of transport.



↑ I hope she wiped her feet before coming in.



↑ You're prompted near interactive objects.



↑ Clearly, Kate loves a fish supper.

The Summary

SYBERIA II: THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- 1 Solid if unspectacular visuals are let down by your frustratingly clumsy and limited movement in many of the locations.
- 2 Countless puzzles that challenge your grey matter, though many feel a little too detached from the main plot.
- 3 Poor voice acting often cheapens the otherwise well-imagined characters. Pity.
- 4 The quirky story is entertaining enough, but pales in comparison to that of the first game.
- 5 Kate can be very hard to manoeuvre and often gets trapped behind small objects or undulations.

The Verdict

Well presented, but sometimes irksome and lacking the quality and depth of its predecessor.

6.0

PREVIOUSLY: Nothing. It's been hidden in the icy wastes
COMING SOON: Hints & cheats

ONE MAN. MANY WEAPONS. INFINITE DESTRUCTION.

©2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft logo, Xbox Live and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of the Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. "Fasa Studio and Microsoft" are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. Portions of the image are the property of Fasa Studio. The names and logos of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be trademarks of their respective owners.

AVAILABLE JANUARY 2005



Microsoft
game studios

WALT DISNEY
Presents

fasa studio

FEATURING MUSIC FROM KORN & PAPA ROACH



MECHASSAULT 2 LONE WOLF

In MechAssault 2 you are one of the last members of the Wolf Dragons and you are no longer confined to a BattleMech®. Scale a wall or Jack a BattleMech with the BattleArmor, jump into a tank or fly the VTOL to carry supplies into battle. Galactic supremacy is the reward in Conquest mode on Xbox Live, as you enter a persistent online world. Join one of five houses on 45 planets and with your clan attempt to conquer the solar system. With new enemies, new weapons and new environments, the choice is yours. MechAssault 2. The biggest battle just got bigger.

xbox.com/mechassault2



It's good to play together

XBOX LIVE

Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005 Season

Didn't shed a tear for Bambi's mum? You'll love this, then...



↑ Actually bagging a deer is a lot harder than it looks!



↑ Shh! You'll scare the deer away!



↑ They can't see you, but they can smell you!



↑ Vehicles cut down travel times.

Bonus info



POINT-SCORING

Players are awarded points based on the size, length and number of points on the antlers that have been successfully captured.

Words: Asher Moses

Dev: Fun Labs	Pub: Activision
Players 1	Live: Scoreboards
Release: Out Now	
www.funlabs.com	

NICHE SPORTING TITLES, particularly if said sport is virtually non-existent in Australia, are particularly difficult for us to score. Clearly, if you're not a die-hard fan of the sport, chances are a simulation of it won't be all that exciting either. Nevertheless, short of venturing into unrestricted hunting terrain overseas, *Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005 Season* is as close as you'll get to a deer hunting experience in Australia. Whether it's any fun or not is an entirely different question.

Rather than taking an arcade focus to hook the casual gamer, *Deer Hunt 2005* is unmistakably a simulation of hunting – apparent from the outset at the character creation screen. Players are able to mould their characters (male or female) around a variety of age groups (from teenagers to 40 and 60 year olds), with varying skin tones. Depending on the age of character chosen, player attributes will vary. For example, a younger character will have poor accuracy but a high endurance; while an older character boasts better accuracy yet lower endurance. For novice hunters, a middle-aged character possesses an even amount of both.

Further heightening the game's realism, the in-game HUD includes a meter that indicates the direction of the wind (hunting downwind means that deer will have a tougher time detecting your scent), as well as a noise level meter. Make too much noise around a deer, and it'll flee into the distance at twice the speed of your walking pace.

Finally, the HUD even enables players to monitor their hydration, nutrition and condition, so you'll clearly know when it's time to use a first aid kit or take a drink.

Deer Hunt 2005 amply caters to a variety of moods through its selection of game modes. Players can select from single hunt, career hunt (cruise through multiple seasons and environments), or a challenge hunt, which has the player performing a variety of tasks such as killing a deer with a single, clean shot or by utilizing a tree stand. Progressing through the game unlocks new equipment and weapons, and there are also shooting matches that offer cash prizes.

Speaking of equipment and weapons, before heading out into the unknown players can purchase various clothing, weaponry (rifles, pistols, shotguns and bows), rations, scopes, decoys and calls to aid in higher level hunting. Of course, these items are scarcely necessary under the easier difficulty levels, where the deer are almost completely oblivious to the player no matter how much noise you make. Conversely, compounded by the lack of a tutorial, higher difficulty levels are virtually impossible to beat for everyone but the seasoned hunter, as not only is the player forced to track each deer using their equipment but also chase after deer that flee at the slightest movement. What's more, hindering the player's use of equipment is the fact that you're only able to carry five items at a time, meaning you'll have to leave behind essentials like water and your map if you'd like to use the full array of calls, scents and other tools.

At the end of the day, the super-realism and extensive range of gameplay types offered by *Deer Hunt 2005* is sure to impress the seasoned deer hunter. But with so many other great sports titles to choose from, the casual gamer would undoubtedly be better off looking elsewhere.

The Summary

CABELA'S DEER HUNT 2005 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- 1 It's only fifty bucks in the shops, which is a steal all things considered. There are other FPSes out there not worth as much.
- 2 This is a game of patience and role-play. You have to manage your own character before you can go out for the kill.
- 3 Easy mode is shamelessly easy (the red dots show where the deer are), but the harder modes are mercilessly tough.
- 4 It's a much slower game to play than usual, so it'll be pretty low on reward if you're a crap shot.
- 5 You can play as a young, middle-aged and elderly man and a young and middle-aged woman. Where are the grannies?

The Verdict

Excellent value for money, though it's far from a conventional shooter. Unexpectedly deep for such a budget title.

6.0/10

It snuck in on us from the bushes.
CRAWLING SQUAD: Hints & cheats

Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures

"Duck season!" "Rabbit season" "Duck season" "RABBIT SEASON!"

Bonus info

HAD YOUR WEETBIX?

Player movement is restricted by the stamina meter, which gives players a limited



amount of running time before they start huffing, wheezing and puffing like a geriatric basketcase with asthma. When that happens, you'll have no choice but to either sit down or hobble along at a snail's pace while the meter replenishes. At least that way, you won't be able to chase down your animals on foot - which would've been pretty silly.

Words: Asher Moses

Dev: Fun Labs	Pub: Activision
Players 1	Live: Scoreboards
Release: Out Now	
www.funlabs.com	

Offering a little more variety to prey on than deer (see page 082), *Big Game Hunter 2005* is a far more interesting hunting experience for the casual gamer yet still includes similar flaws.

Compared to *Deer Hunter*, *Big Game Hunter's* career hunt mode is far more cohesive and linear, with players interacting with in-game locations and NPCs in order to access various missions, trophies and the store, rather than using graphical menus. This takes a little more time, but is significantly more immersive. Using maps and objectives that are accessible via PDA, players can hunt specific targets or follow secondary quests, like taking down a wounded animal. These animals are much more exciting to hunt than those in *Deer Hunter*, as they'll attack you if you come too close.

Character creation in *Big Game Hunter* is a little different to *Deer Hunter* in that players can manually add skill points to five attributes (aim, accuracy, strength, stealth, resilience and tracking), which of course depends on how they intend to play the game. There is also a wrestling-style selection of character cosmetics and facial features.

As far as difficulty levels are concerned, *Big Game Hunter* suffers from the same flaws as *Deer Hunter*, in that the easier levels are far too simple

and have very little depth (items like tracking equipment are useless here as animals are shown on the map by a red dot), while the more advanced levels have a huge learning curve that require far more patience than usual.

On the plus side, while stealth is still required in *Big Game Hunter* (as indicated by the stealth meter located on the HUD), animals are far less sensitive than those in *Deer Hunter*, thus reducing frustration immensely.

As far as graphics are concerned, visuals are not as detailed as in *Deer Hunter*, but they're nonetheless adequate and the various environmental objects provide sufficient obstacles that serve to make gameplay both interesting and realistic. Animals, disregarding some occasional pixilation, are rendered fluidly, but movement can appear quite mechanical at times. Additionally, the game can be played in both first and third person modes; however, first person is more conducive to an enjoyable experience as controlling the character is far less frustrating.

Just as important as graphics, *Big Game Hunter's* audio is quite bland, with the only sounds heard being that of the unseen wildlife that surrounds you, whether it's their unique noises or the rustling of foliage. While some voice acting is present, it comes from a single narrator who simply informs players of their current mission status.

After playing through both *Big Game Hunter* and *Deer Hunter*, it's clear that the former is, from an all-round perspective, far more impressive due to its adventure aspects and the fact that the gameplay and variety of animals are geared more towards the casual gamer. This is a try-before-you-buy for newcomers to hunting.



↑ Stay low to reduce your visibility.



↑ Pick a face, any face.



↑ Rejects from the latest Pixar short.



↑ Well, he *almost* looks like Rambo...



↑ There's a much greater variety of animals to hunt in this game.

The Summary

CABELA'S BIG GAME HUNTER 2005 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- 1 Yep, you guessed it - it's another budget title, going for \$49.95. That's pretty good value for a shooter like this.
- 2 Graphics aren't as pretty as *Deer Hunter*, but there's a lot more to interact with in this game.
- 3 Looking and waiting for the next animal to cross your path can be an utter yawnfest at times.
- 4 It's Xbox Live compatible, and it's possible to compare your scores on the scoreboard.
- 5 Animals can actually attack you in this game, so you have to be doubly careful while you stalk around.

The Verdict

Well presented, but sometimes irksome and lacking the quality and depth of its predecessor.

7.2/10

PREVIOUSLY: Nothing. It's been hidden in the bushes with *Deer Hunter*
COMING SOON: Hints & cheats

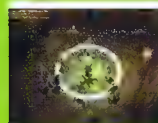


Elite Directory

The best of Xbox games that scored 8.5 and more!



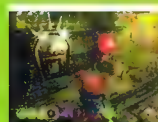
AMPED 2
REVIEWED: Issue 22
TYPE: Extreme sports
"Stunning graphics. Dead easy to pick up and play but furiously addictive"
SCORE 8.9



BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE
REVIEWED: Issue 08
TYPE: Action RPG
"Absorbing RPG with a healthy dose of hack 'n' slashing"
SCORE 8.5



BEYOND GOOD & EVIL
REVIEWED: Issue 25
TYPE: Adventure
"Diverse and delicious. This isn't about violence, but about story, subterfuge and character"
SCORE 8.9



BLINK: THE TIME SWEEPER
REVIEWED: Issue 08
TYPE: Platformer
"Takes platform gaming into uncharted territory. Essential"
SCORE 9.2



BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Adventure
"A detective game that will stick with you after you've finished"
SCORE 9.0



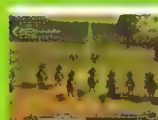
BRUTE FORCE
REVIEWED: Issue 15
TYPE: Squad-based shooter
"Multiplayer elevates Brute Force from a good to a potentially great game"
SCORE 9.4



BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT
REVIEWED: Issue 16
TYPE: Driving
"A classic arcade racer that makes you sweat and grin"
SCORE 8.9



CHAMP MANAGER: SEASON 01/02
REVIEWED: Issue 02
TYPE: Sports
"Easily the best game of its kind... indefinite lifespan"
SCORE 8.8



KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: THE CRUSADERS
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: Strategy
"Bloody and beautiful, with a superb atmosphere"
SCORE 8.9



COLIN MCRAC RALLY 04
REVIEWED: Issue 21
TYPE: Driving
"Rallying at its grandest, prettiest and most absorbing. The best rally game ever made"
SCORE 9.1



CRIMSON SKIES
REVIEWED: Issue 22
TYPE: Action
"A great package that's been playtested to death - and it looks gorgeous"
SCORE 8.9



DEAD OR ALIVE 3
REVIEWED: Issue 01
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"Accessible, slick and as satisfying as any beat 'em up. This is a visual benchmark"
SCORE 8.5



DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR
REVIEWED: Issue 25
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Mind-blowing, expertly crafted experience. Don't miss it"
SCORE 9.0



ENTER THE MATRIX
REVIEWED: Issue 16
TYPE: Action
"A slick action romp that genuinely adds something new to the licence"
SCORE 8.5



FIFA FOOTBALL 2004
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Sports
"Incredible player models, fluid animation, ridiculously pretty. The best Xbox footy title"
SCORE 8.7



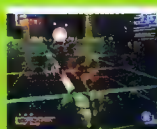
FIGHT NIGHT 2004
REVIEWED: Issue 27
TYPE: Sports
"Absorbing, sweat-drenched title. Dazzling graphics and a groundbreaking control system"
SCORE 8.6



FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR
REVIEWED: ISSUE 28
TYPE: Strategy
"Fantastic strategy. Captures the visceral atmosphere of war"
SCORE 8.9



X-MEN LEGENDS
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: Action RPG
"A welcome blend of fighting and role-play for the comic book series"
SCORE 8.5



DEATHROW
REVIEWED: Issue 06
TYPE: Future sports
"A tragically under-marketed sports game that's perfect for Speedball fans of old"
SCORE 9.3



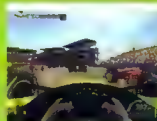
GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Driving
"PS2 port, but a benchmark of crime titles yet to be beaten"
SCORE 9.3



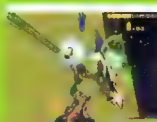
HALO
REVIEWED: Issue 01
TYPE: FPS
"Quite simply, a masterpiece and without question one of the best games ever made"
SCORE 9.7



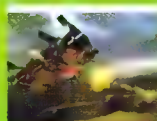
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER
REVIEWED: Issue 04
TYPE: Action adventure
"A brilliant use of the Buffy license for a beat 'em up"
SCORE 8.9



INDYCAR SERIES
REVIEWED: Issue 18
TYPE: Driving
"You won't find a better racing sim on Xbox. Very technically demanding"
SCORE 8.6



JET SET RADIO FUTURE
REVIEWED: Issue 01
TYPE: Platformer/Extreme sports
"Supremely playable and very stylish. Huge, intricate levels"
SCORE 8.9



YAGER
REVIEWED: Issue 12
TYPE: Flight Sim
"Futuristic flight sim with some decent dogfighting action thrown in. Solid"
SCORE 8.6



MADDEN NFL 2004
REVIEWED: Issue 21
TYPE: US sports
"Stunning rendition no Gridiron fan should underestimate. Looks and sounds real"
SCORE 9.3



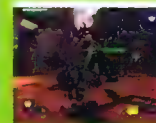
MADDEN NFL 2005
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: Sports
"The best Madden game ever. No joke. NFL fans will be thoroughly satisfied"
SCORE 9.3



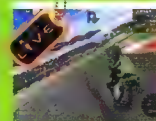
MASHED
REVIEWED: Issue 30
TYPE: Racing
"Without doubt one of the finest multiplayer games ever, but single-player is a bit weak"
SCORE 8.6



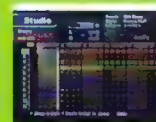
MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE
REVIEWED: Issue 25
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Definitive blockbuster action title bursting with new ideas"
SCORE 9.2



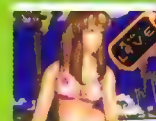
METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Gorgeous graphics, engaging characters, stacks of variety"
SCORE 9.0



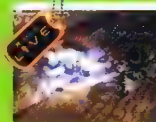
MOTOGP 2: URT
REVIEWED: Issue 15
TYPE: Bike racing
"Stupendous visuals. Brilliant bike customisation. So thrilling it'll make your knees bleed"
SCORE 8.9



MTV MUSIC GEN. 3
REVIEWED: Issue 29
TYPE: Music
"Essential for anyone with aspirations of headlining at Ministry. Playable and friendly"
SCORE 8.5



DOA XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL
REVIEWED: Issue 13
TYPE: US sports
"A laid back volleyball game with eyecandy as the reward"
SCORE 8.6



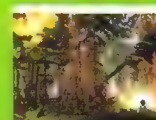
NINJA GAIDEN
REVIEWED: Issue 27
TYPE: Action
"Groundbreaking beat 'em up of the highest calibre. A must for anyone who can hold a pad"
SCORE 9.5



PANZER DRAGON ORTA
REVIEWED: Issue 13
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Cutting-edge looks and classic blasting. Gorgeous"
SCORE 9.0



CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO
REVIEWED: Issue 13
TYPE: Fighting
"The best 2D fighter you'll find on Xbox"
SCORE 9.0



STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: Shoot 'em up
"This is a game no Star Wars fan can afford to miss."
SCORE 8.7



TOP 5... Extreme Sports Games

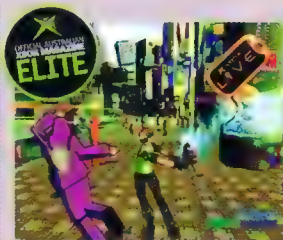
Rollersnowskatewakeboard 'tastic!



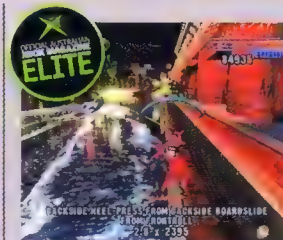
AMPED 2 Amped 2 has got whole mountains of extreme winter fun for you, whether 'boarding solo or against others on Xbox Live.
Issue 22, SCORE 8.9



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND The most recent release in this constantly surprising franchise features loads of jackass capers with Bam.
Issue 22, SCORE 8.8



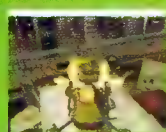
JET SET RADIO FUTURE It's now an oldie but a goodie, with one of the most stylish cartoon game engines ever and loads of street-based skating.
Issue 02, SCORE 8.9



WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED Featuring Shaun Murray, this water-based ramp-fest is enormous entertainment for fans and newcomers.
Issue 17, SCORE 8.6



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 The Underground editions have better graphics, but this remains the other highest-scoring Hawk game in this mag.
Issue 02, SCORE 8.5



PHANTOM CRASH
 REVIEWED: Issue 09
 TYPE: Mech shooter
 "Extremely enjoyable. Frantic action backed up with an impressive career mode"
SCORE 8.6



PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME
 REVIEWED: Issue 25
 TYPE: Adventure
 "The Prince is the new King of platformers. Truly outstanding"
SCORE 9.4



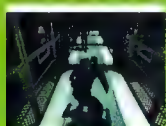
PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2
 REVIEWED: Issue 22
 TYPE: Driving
 "Gorgeous and ace to play. The definitive driving experience"
SCORE 9.3



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND
 REVIEWED: Issue 23
 TYPE: Racer
 "Fast and furious - a great underground racer"
SCORE 8.9



RALLISPORT CHALL. 2
 REVIEWED: Issue 28
 TYPE: Driving
 "Edge-of-your-seat racer. Looks and plays great, with brilliant Xbox Live multiplayer"
SCORE 9.2



SPLINTER CELL
 REVIEWED: Issue 08
 TYPE: Action-adventure
 "The original and the best. Marks an exciting new direction in stealth gaming"
SCORE 9.7



FABLE
 REVIEWED: Issue 32
 TYPE: RPG
 "Incredibly deep. Demands to be replayed several times over. Utterly gorgeous"
SCORE 9.7



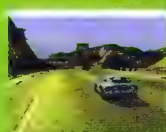
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN
 REVIEWED: Issue 15
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "Superb single-player, outstanding on Xbox Live"
SCORE 9.2



ROCKY
 REVIEWED: Issue 09
 TYPE: Sports
 "Brilliantly evocative, this is dramatic multiplayer scrapping at its finest"
SCORE 9.0



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005
 REVIEWED: Issue 33
 TYPE: Sports
 "Drives the perfect line between sim and arcade fun"
SCORE 8.7



BURNOUT 3
 REVIEWED: Issue 32
 TYPE: Driving
 "Arcade racing has never been so incredibly and dangerously fun. Must-have material"
SCORE 9.2



FIGHT NIGHT 2004
 REVIEWED: Issue 27
 TYPE: Sports
 "Fluid, fast and extremely fun to play. A much needed booster shot for the genre"
SCORE 8.6



SOUL CALIBUR II
 REVIEWED: Issue 19
 TYPE: Beat 'em up
 "The most fluid fighter ever. Easy to pick up, tough to master, graphically superb"
SCORE 9.4



SPIDER-MAN
 REVIEWED: Issue 03
 TYPE: Action
 "Huge environment to explore - you'll be smashing and swinging in no time"
SCORE 8.8



SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW
 REVIEWED: Issue 25
 TYPE: Action-adventure
 "Enhances everything that was good about the original"
SCORE 9.4



STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC
 REVIEWED: Issue 20
 TYPE: RPG
 "One of the most compelling games on any console ever"
SCORE 9.5



NBA 2K3
 REVIEWED: Issue 14
 TYPE: Sports
 "A solid basketball game with all the fundamentals. Great presentation, too"
SCORE 9.0



SUDEKI
 REVIEWED: Issue 31
 TYPE: RPG
 "One of the best-looking games on Xbox. A brilliant, vibrant adventure romp with great AI"
SCORE 8.7



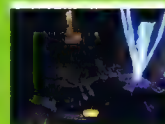
THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: EFBB
 REVIEWED: Issue 29
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "Intuitive controls. Stylish, atmospheric and violent"
SCORE 9.1



OUTRUN 2
 REVIEWED: Issue 33
 TYPE: Racing
 "Top-notch racer with brilliant controls. Perfect for fans new and old"
SCORE 8.5



LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
 REVIEWED: Issue 22
 TYPE: Action
 "Recreates the film beautifully. A blockbuster action game"
SCORE 9.1



THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS
 REVIEWED: Issue 29
 TYPE: Stealth
 "Captivating, atmospheric, with massive replayability"
SCORE 8.6



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003
 REVIEWED: Issue 11
 TYPE: Sports
 "Great swing system. Loads of modes. Fantastic courses"
SCORE 8.5



TIMESPLITTERS 2
 REVIEWED: Issue 09
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "The most complete FPS package on Xbox. Rife with features. Just buy it"
SCORE 9.3



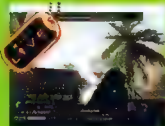
V8 SUPERCARS 2
 REVIEWED: Issue 27
 TYPE: Racing
 "The most realistic, detailed racer ever. Gorgeous graphics, incredible variety and handling"
SCORE 9.5



NFL 2K3
 REVIEWED: Issue 14
 TYPE: Sports
 "A great game, but possibly too much of a challenge for the novices"
SCORE 9.2



TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER
 REVIEWED: Issue 21
 TYPE: Squad-based shooter
 "Atmospheric with online play"
SCORE 8.5



TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3
 REVIEWED: Issue 22
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "The ultimate package for fans of realism-based FPSs"
SCORE 9.3



TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3: BLACK ARROW
 REVIEWED: Issue 31
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "Looks ace and only \$50!"
SCORE 9.0



CONFLICT VIETNAM
 REVIEWED: Issue 33
 TYPE: Squad shooter
 "Bigger and tougher than Desert Storm. Fans of the genre will love it"
SCORE 8.5



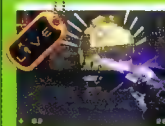
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
 REVIEWED: Issue 22
 TYPE: Extreme sports
 "Refreshingly different and diverse. Hop off and explore!"
SCORE 8.8



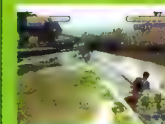
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
 REVIEWED: Issue 09
 TYPE: Extreme sports
 "Silky trick system. Absolutely tons to do, and then some"
SCORE 9.0



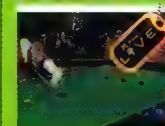
TOP SPIN
 REVIEWED: Issue 21
 TYPE: Sports
 "Incredible detail. Hands down this is the best tennis game in the world"
SCORE 9.0



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP
 REVIEWED: Issue 10
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "This sets a new standard for multiplayer shooters"
SCORE 9.2



WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED FEAT. SHAWN MURRAY
 REVIEWED: Issue 17
 TYPE: Extreme sports
 "Outrageous arcade action"
SCORE 8.6



WORLD CHAMP. SNOOKER 2004
 REVIEWED: Issue 31
 TYPE: Sports
 "Tension-filled fun for anyone remotely interested in snooker"
SCORE 8.8



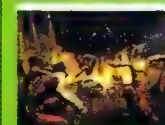
XIII
 REVIEWED: Issue 22
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "Unique, stylish and captivating. You can't afford to miss this superb FPS"
SCORE 8.6



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005
 REVIEWED: Issue 3
 TYPE: Racing
 "A perfect blend of arcade and simulation racing"
SCORE 8.5



HALO 2
 REVIEWED: Issue 34
 TYPE: First-person shooter
 "Style and substance in equal measure. An absolutely flawless game!"
SCORE 10.0



PRINCE OF PERSIA 2: WARRIOR WITHIN
 REVIEWED: Issue 34
 TYPE: Adventure
 "Platforming gold. As good as the original."
SCORE 9.4



Full interactive Reviews Directory

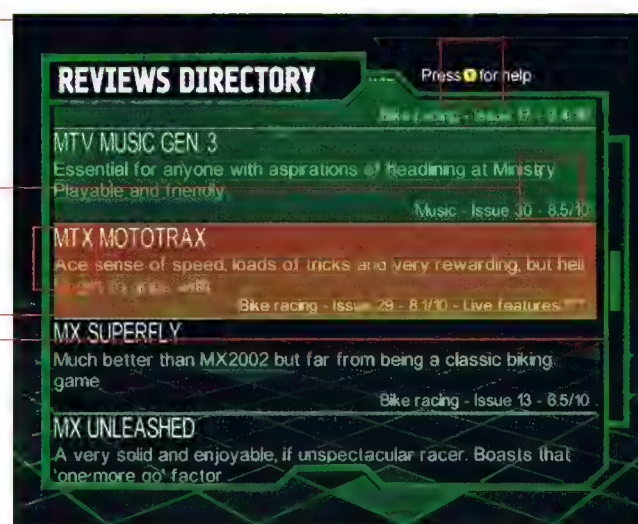
The ultimate guide to Xbox games...
 We've slipped it onto our disc

If you forget what any of the different colours mean, press the Y button to bring up a handy help menu.

The bottom bar indicates the game type, the issue the review appeared and the review score out of ten.

A game highlighted in orange is Xbox Live-enabled. A game in bright green is an Xbox Elite title.

The scroll bar indicates how far down the list you are. You can progress one game at a time with the D-pad.



XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED

LiveReviews

We take a look at recently reviewed Xbox Live-enabled games and rate their online performance



Mortal Kombat: Deception

Three games for the price of your soul!

Reviewed: Issue 34 Score: 8.2
Players: 1-2 Live: 1-2 players

BE YOUR POISON chess, *Tetris*, or ripping spines out the top of people's necks, *Mortal Kombat: Deception* has the ability to titillate and tease online, and we loved every minute of it. The three wildly different modes of play in the offline game translate easily to Live gaming. Although we were hard pushed to find anyone actually playing the cutesy *Tetris*-style Puzzle Kombat or the rather more intellectual Chess Kombat (we found none in the few hours we had tinkering around, even when we attempted to set up and host our own chess tournament), to have them included scores major Brownie points.

The online game is great though, with superbly easy quick match modes firing up as soon as the Xbox seems to have powered. Plus there are all those juicy Opti-match choices which add breadth and depth to the game, although goodness knows who'd create an Opti-match where guts and gore were turned off.



↑ TheBugStomper (OXM) does some stomping!

It would have been so easy to just include the Kombat mode, but the inclusion of leaderboards, all manner of stats, plus the two daft mini-games are a great indication of where some titles seem to be going with Live and just what the service can do for us. It may be the Kombat equivalent of Live Arcade, but who cares? It's a great Live package that comes with quality supported by a couple of handy nicknacks.



↑ We found that not only was *Mortal Kombat* great for choice on Live, but the speed and attacks were just as devastating too.

The Verdict

A strong, enjoyable contender online. The inclusion of chess and puzzle games is a little redundant but great news.

4/5

Pool Shark 2

Just when you thought it was safe to get back on Live

Reviewed: Issue 35 Score: 8.4
Players: 1-2 Live: 2 players

IT'S BEEN ALMOST a year since we reviewed Blade Interactive's other pool title, *World Championship Pool 2004*. While most of the improvements in *Pool Shark 2* are cosmetic, Blade has introduced some new tweaks and features on the Live front.

Most obviously, it has the edge over other Live pool games because you can hustle your opponent for cash at any point in the match. It's as straightforward to do as going to the options menu and sending a challenge, just as you would with a friend invite. Your opponent then gets to choose if they want to up the stakes.

You start off with a world ranking and a pot of cash. Only the championship games affect your wealth and standing. Unlike *WCP2004*, you're penalised for quitting a championship game mid-match, which is a great way to deal with sore losers. Voice messaging is also a welcome addition if you're into trash-talking.

Somewhat disappointingly though, only the host's character appears at the tableside (not you), and you don't even get to see him taking a shot. Presumably, this was done to speed up the pace of the game, but we'd at least have liked the option to see them cueing.

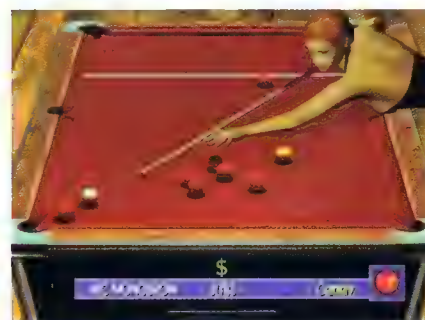


↑ A match of invisible opponents, but hey, it's a sturdy enough effort.

Nevertheless, *Pool Shark 2* is a fairly big improvement over *WCP2004* and delivers the desired gameplay in spades. It also bodes very well for the potential of future Xbox Live games where a little gambling is involved (hey, how cool would that be in sports games?)



↑ Make sure Twig Legs doesn't put you off.



↑ Helloooooo legs.

The Verdict

A fun, chilled out game that's much more fun with two players. The hustling feature is simple but works very well.

3/5

GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

No Mister Bond, we expect you to die...

Reviewed: Issue 35	Score: 8.0
Players: 1; 2-4 Split	Live: 2-8 players
Players: 2-16 S Link	

FOR A GAME that wasn't quite brilliant in single player, it's refreshing to see at least some effort being put into the Xbox Live side of things. Besides being able to cackle all the cheesy Bond one-liners ("I think he got the point", "Shocking" etc) via the headset, there's almost enough beginners' appeal here to make a few return visits worthwhile.

Matches are easily created (very easy in fact), and once in and killing, *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* lives up, at least in part, to what a decent enough online FPS should be.

Showdown deathmatches are the highlight (variants of King Of The Hill and other deathmatch modes make up the rest), especially as mild cues seem to have been taken from *Halo 2* with respect to there being dual wielding, a similar control system, a handy wealth of scattered weaponry and shields, and no camping grounds. What it doesn't do though is ever stretch itself. There is nothing here we haven't seen before, which makes it especially sad considering the N64 *GoldenEye*'s multiplayer options did it so much better all those years ago. Thankfully, *GoldenEye* seems to find some kind of niche as a beginners' Live shooter,



↑ *GoldenEye*'s must-have weapon. It's a bit of a clunker but does great damage to multiple enemies with its handy spray-fire ability.

and this is where its appeal will lay. The menu system is so easily navigated you could almost stumble into the Quickmatch option by accident. How long you stay there though depends entirely on how willing you are you put up with Live options that are beige through and through.



↑ Our enemy went for the shield - we had him!



↑ Oops, too close. A little too close.

The Verdict

Too generic to really stand out as a class Live effort, but for entry-level Live gamers you could get your teeth on worse.

3/5

Ghost Recon 2

Redeeming itself through the power of Live...

Reviewed: Issue 35	Score: 8.0
Players: 1-4 Split	Live: 2-16 players

IT'S HARD adapting to *Ghost Recon* now that it's gone third person, but thankfully it still manages to muster something of a punch on Xbox Live. After all, that's what we want from the Recon boys.

Solo, co-op, and squad matches are all available to play in, which effectively turns each map into very different scenarios every time they're played. As for the maps themselves, most of them tend to be a little big for fewer than half a dozen gamers, but once a full contingent of 16 is signed up, things can get fairly hectic.

Higher-ranking gamers tend to know exactly where people are going to spawn and the more cowardly among them elect to spawn-camp, so if you're up for a little payback, keep your sniper rifles trained on them for the majority of the matches. It's a terrible cycle of frustration to go through, especially for novices, as respawns take far too long (we're talking in excess of ten seconds at least).

Once the terrain is learned, though, there's no stopping the killing, and there are always enough gamers to fill the space. In fact, despite the faffing around you'll need to do in the overly fiddly menu system in order to get a match going, once you



↑ He kills you as you kill him - it's like a bad John Woo movie.

finally do, there are far worse ways to spend a couple of hours of online time.

It may not have lived up to its predecessors as an offline game, but online it delivers a healthy dose of intense, competitive gaming in all the right areas.



↑ A well-placed rocket sorts out most enemies.



↑ Xxx

The Verdict

Ghost Recon has always been designed to be played on Live, and this third-person effort is no exception. Class

4/5

XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED

LiveReviews

We take a look at recently reviewed Xbox Live-enabled games and rate their online performance



Fight Club

The second rule of Fight Club: don't play Fight Club

Reviewed: Issue 37	Score: 6.4
Players: 1-2	Live: 2 players
Players: 2 S.Link	

TO PLAY THIS Live is the same as playing it offline. The game wasn't great in single-player, and even with real opponents rather than the awful AI greasemonkeys, it still sucks. Turns out having real opponents doesn't help too much after all.

We managed to brawl our way through a couple of bouts with the same opponent, before we both seemed to come to the conclusion that basically... this is tedious on Live. If we weren't quitting out hoping to find, just maybe, an explosive fight somewhere else, our rival was doing the same. Turns out there wasn't one - anywhere.

Every match is staggeringly slow, the Quickmatch options always seem to revolve around the need to quit back to the main menu after every punch is thrown, and you can complete a match holding your breath it takes so little time. Other Live options are virtually non-existent. There's the Optimatch options (you can choose



↑ Rainy, grey and boring. Great ingredients!

between bland, bland, or bland), and that's it. That's your lot.

The fact that it's got Live play at all should probably be commended - after all, it's the way forward. But when the rewards are so fruitless and the game so pointless, it does make you question exactly why *Fight Club* even bothered in the first place. Rubbish - though you do get the chance to punch Meatloaf in his bitch-tits.



↑ Two types of Tyler go at it in an anonymous car park somewhere. Hardly *Dead or Alive Ultimate*, is it?

The Verdict

Err... If you can actually be bothered to plug into Live and have a match you'll be... 1/5

Worms Forts: Under Siege

Live at last and chewing up our online time

Reviewed: Issue 35	Score: 8.4
Players: 1-8	Live: 2-8 players

NOW THIS IS more like it. For too long us *Worms* fans have been hankering to play our favourite subterranean turn-based strategy game on Xbox Live, so when it arrived, we were over the moon to find it didn't disappoint.

Worms Live plays very much like the standard game offline, only this time we're actually able to see what our rival is going to do. Unlike offline mode, the camera automatically switches over to your enemy's perspective when it's their turn to make a move. Every move they make and every strategic decision is played out on screen, so rather than spending every other minute as an interval, you can now get the lowdown on what lies in store. In fact, it almost feels like cheating. But then again, the same will obviously apply for your enemy, which renders any accusation of cheating moot and turns every subsequent move you make that much more interesting.

Unfortunately, there's no news yet on downloadable content at the moment, but there are oodles of environments, weapons options, even Worm clothing that can be optimised before you venture into the field of combat - which is ideal if two clans want to go head to head. In fact, it's pretty ideal if anyone wants to start up a head to



↑ Get the lowdown on your enemy's every move and thought. Genius!

head match. The *Worms* series has been crying out for some Xbox Live support and, now it's finally got it, we can all dive in and enjoy the big squishy death-dealing goodness it's famous for. Extra content would have been nice, but besides that it's a real doozy of a game to play on Xbox Live.



↑ Once you know where he is, zoom on over!



↑ Bigger buildings = bigger weapons!

The Verdict

It's about time too! *Worms* not only does Live, but does it well. The chance to see your enemy's thoughts is... 4/5

Need For Speed Underground 2

Speed's required on the menu screen too by the looks of it

Reviewed: Issue 34

Score: 8.8

Players: 2 Split

Live: 2-6 players

ALTHOUGH NOT quite the online debacle that was *Burnout 3: Takedown*, Electronic Art's other online racer, *Need For Speed Underground 2*, suffers pretty much the same fate when it comes to getting a game started. Sure enough, we did manage to get into a few races, but getting there was something of a slog. We were often timed out of the lobby and thrown the old 'this session is no longer available' bollocks, even though four gamers had already indicated they were good to go and were up for it. And this is in Quickmatch, too, supposedly the easiest and, ahem, 'quickest' way to get a race started.

Still, once we were up and running things were okay, despite us only being able to race our meagre library of cars - even though the host had fully unlocked his set. To use the host's would have been extremely handy, especially as we were trailing way behind after just a few seconds, but at least that gave us the impetus to go back and unlock the rest of them offline.

Connection problems weren't an issue once we were actually racing, and we did manage to struggle over the line and complete a match, but getting there in the first place was half the struggle. Sure, the EA server is considerably better than it was with



Our clapped-out-mobile was no match for the rest of the *Need For Speed* online racers. Must try harder OXM!

Burnout 3: Takedown, but until we can just jump straight into a game without being timed out or suffering some kind of infuriating connection failure, it seems these potentially superb games are going to wallow a little bit longer on the sidelines. A pity, really.



Trailing again, we felt the burn from our rivals.



Show off your cars online!

The Verdict

Still a few server issues to contend with but once a race is underway, *NFS* purrs into action. Get good cars though!

3/5

Guilty Gear X2 Reload

Erm... hello? Anyone playing this?

Reviewed: Issue 36

Score: 8.4

Players: 1-2

Live: 2 players

GUILTY GEAR X2 *Reload*, an old-school 2D fighting game featuring a myriad of anime-inspired characters, a plethora of super moves, a smorgasbord of attacks, and nobody on Live. That's right, not a single solitary sausage. Not a squeak to be found.

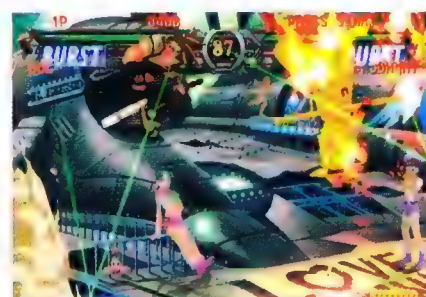
We tried over a series of four days at regular intervals to get online and have a match with anyone who was up for the challenge, but there wasn't a soul to be seen. We tried in the morning, we tried at night. We tried at lunchtime and in the evening, we tried standing on our hands drinking a glass of water upside down - but still nothing. It's a pity, given that the offline game barely missed an Elite score in issue 36, and especially as (as far as 2D fighters go) this is an intense wedge of brawling face-slapping. But, this is a Live review and if a Live game fails to attract (based on four days of constant searching at least), even one single player, it's going to fail inevitably by default.

We're all for playing games on Xbox Live, and the more games that include it, the better. It's just that this game happens to fall into a very hardcore demographic, and the franchise itself is quite obscure to anyone who missed the previous outings on PSone and Dreamcast. Is it any surprise that

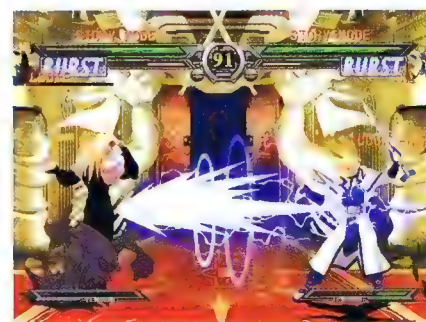


Try as we might, this is all we saw when it came to playing online.

the lobbies were empty? One day every game will have Xbox Live compatibility (*Guilty Gear* has both online play and leaderboards - currently empty), but until every Xbox owner becomes a subscriber to Xbox Live, we're be seeing a few more of these empty games.



We gave up, went offline and had a ball!



At least it's playable offline.

The Verdict

The first of its kind we've experienced and what a pity. If only a few people were online it'd score far, far higher.

1/5

Masterclass: Call of Duty: Finest Hour

Having trouble keeping tabs on the German assault of Stalingrad? Wondering where the next Stuka fighter plane will attack from? Look no further - we've crushed the onslaught and here's your way out. Tank you!

FROM THE BURNING ruins of Stalingrad to the outskirts of Berlin, *Call of Duty: Finest Hour* takes you into the thick of some of the fiercest battles of World War II. Keep your head down and read this guide, and you may live to see the end.

EASTERN FRONT NOT ONE STEP BACK

Once you're off the boat, go stand in line for rifle ammo and follow Puskov across the battlefield. When you reach the factory ruins, grab the discarded rifle. Go prone and take careful potshots at the Germans across the yard. Ignore Puskov until he rushes for the window, then grab an MP40 and take out the Germans on the street.

Puskov will set an explosive. Once it goes off, follow him a bit further. While the other Russians rush the gunners, flank them and clear the Nazis out room by room.

THE FLAG MUST FALL

Kick open the door, then fade back and let your buddies do their job. Go inside, nail the stragglers, then bust into the next few rooms. When you reach the turret, you'll eventually have to take over. Focus fire on the enemy machine-gun nests before wiping out the infantry.

Before you leave, grab Puskov's PPSH. It'll be a lot of help as you run up the hill, through the German trenches and into the Nazi bunker. If anyone gets in your way, knock 'em down with melee attacks or a quick burst of gunfire. When you get into the bunker itself, go prone and kill everyone inside. Rip down the flag.

DEAD IN HER SIGHTS

Slide from window to window and nail eight Germans. A tank will roll into view at the far end of the street with three soldiers riding shotgun; kill them to protect your sapper. Now follow Kirelenko. Since you're a sniper in this mission, you shouldn't feel obliged to get into a fight. Just rush from the building to behind the wrecked tank, then get after Kirelenko. He'll lead you into the sewers.

Grab an MP40 for close-quarters work. You're playing follow-the-gunfire here, so if you see a Nazi, chase him. Eventually, when Kirelenko points out a tunnel to you, crouch to get through it. The German turrets near the end of the sewers can be dealt with easily if you stay back and look for a good angle;



↑ Firing from a prone position like this minimises your vulnerability.



↑ Hold the Left trigger to use your rifle's sights.



↑ See these guys? We hate these guys.

with your sniper rifle, you can easily shoot a gunner dead without him getting a clean shot at you.

DEFEND THE FACTORY

Crouch and run through the trench to the factory. From its balcony, listen to Sovolov and kill the Nazis as they run into view. The Panzerschreck goons are no big deal, but the gunners can be a serious problem. Watch for the two Nazis moving really close together, and kill one of them before they can set up their turret.

Once your ten minutes are up, go see the Commissar. From the side door, kill the Nazis menacing the tank crew. When they come into the factory, use a health pack, then mount the tank.

BREAKDOWN

Ignore the Nazis across the square. The ones you need to deal with are the ones who'll try to flank you and get a shot at Belinki. Stay near him.



↑ Your sniper rifle is perfect for getting safe, clean shots at gunners.



↑ If a tank's on fire, it's no longer a threat.

ANTI-GUNNER TACTICS

You'll have to take out a lot of German gunners. Grenades or a Panzerschreck shell work, but more often you'll need to let your men distract the gunner while you flank or snipe him.



BENNY CHURCH

When you play as Chuck Walker, note the presence of Sgt Church. Since the game needs him for cutscenes, he can't be killed. Lead him blithely into heavy fire - he's guaranteed to come back out.

PRICE OF DYING

If you get killed, you'll usually end up at the last checkpoint with predetermined weapons, full health and no medikits. Quit and restart to get the weapons you had before.

When the tank's fixed, get in and prepare for a bit of frustration. Stay in first-person view and advance slowly. The next few blocks are rife with rocket snipers and enemy tanks, any one of which can ruin your day. Deal with them from a distance, and try to exploit corners and ground clutter to your advantage. Your next couple of objectives are synonyms for destroying Panzers, which you're going to want to do anyway.

With the streets as clear as they're going to get, park the tank outside the harbour house and speak with the General. Grab the radio before you leave.

INTO RED SQUARE

Let the other tank take the point and watch out for the 'Schreckers. When you reach Red Square, zoom in and shell the gunners in the buildings across the plaza, then back up and find some cover. Dismantle the oncoming Panzers from long range.

When you reach the train station, ram the front doors, then back up and nail the Germans on the balcony with your main gun. Dismount. The rest of this mission is a room-by-room clearing exercise, not wildly dissimilar to Sovolov's levels. Just don't shoot anyone in the field infirmary. It's rude.

OP. LITTLE SATURN

You have to really lead a Stuka to knock it out of the sky. Once six of them are down, they'll



↑ Taking cover: it's not just for infantry anymore. Highly recommended!



↑ This is easier than it looks. Honestly.

'retreat'. Follow the rest of your tank column into the airfield's perimeter and shoot everything you see; your main priorities are flak guns and other tanks, but our buddies the 'Schreckers should not be ignored. Your goal is to reach the east gate barracks, which are defended by two tanks, a turret gun, and a 'Schrecker on the roof.

In the warehouse, get out, go upstairs, kill the 'Schreckers, and use the stairs past their position to get back to your tank.

EASTERN FRONT: AIRFIELD ASSAULT

Stay in formation as you roll out. It's a good idea to let your buddies take most of the risks; you'll live longer.

As you hit the airfield, wipe out the infantry. Once you get your new objective, break left, then kill the 'Schrecker, and go into the hangar. Break the plane here, then turn around and do some damage from the doorway. This will cut down on the risk of a crossfire.

Your next challenge is the runway. You can shoot down planes all day if you want, but that's not your objective. You just need to get to the other end of the runway in one piece. Do not roll straight down the middle of the lane, as a crashing plane can destroy your tank. Instead, stay to one side and roll over any threats.

At the north end of the airfield, hop out of the tank and find some cover as soon as possible. Your assault on the control tower will be complicated by a tank and a gun turret. Wait for them to get distracted, then make a break for the parked trucks. One has a Panzerschreck in its back. Use one shell to destroy the tank and the other shell to incapacitate the gunner.

Now, storm the tower and shoot everyone inside. From the roof, go back down one floor and take the book off the desk.



↑ If you want to knock down supply planes, do it from beside the runway.

HIDE AND SNEAK Grab a rifle and hunt them down

Crouching improves your aim, while going prone makes you a very small target. If you're standing still or rushing over to cover, do one or the other...

...and here's Fritz to show you how to crouch.

Headshots aren't quite as precise as you might like them to be. Double-tap everything, and go for the centre of mass.

You can carry up to six medical kits at once. Look for them on dead Nazis or in the nooks and crannies of the map.

Your finite health meter. It'll be gone before you know it.

In most levels, you'll burn through your initial weapons fairly quickly. Don't hesitate to capture German weaponry if you need it.

MEDICI

Use medikits on CPU buddies by walking up to them and pressing up on the D-pad. They may be stupid, but they're also useful.

RHYTHM NATION

Each rifle has a certain rhythm to it, as your character racks the slide. Get used to the rhythm and work with it.



NORTH AFRICA MISSION: MATMATA

Carlyle's a demolitionist. As such, try to hang back and let your buddies do as much work as they can. They can take out the first two turrets without your help, but you'll want to help storm the stairs and seize the third one. This, conveniently, also gives you a great vantage point from which to toss sticky grenades at the Tiger tank.

Rush the headquarters, go out the back door, kill the Nazis in the yard, and set your charge on the antenna. Next up: clearing another fortress. Go sneak into the city and work your way over to the gun nests. Climb the stairs after the Sarge, then grab the turret and spray the Nazis with bullets. Stay here until most of the Nazis have been dealt with, then find Starkey and set a charge on the generator.



DEPOT SABOTEURS

Follow Starkey, grab some mines, and jump out the window after him. When he storms the building, circle around it and hit it from the other side. Now take cover; you can destroy the tanks



↑ Mate in your way? Hit Black to move him.

with your landmines (risky) or with sticky grenades from a safe distance (preferable).

Move from doorway to doorway to reach the fuel depot, pausing occasionally to snipe the gunners before they carve you up. Once you're inside the depot proper, continue the elaborate process of sniping gunners, then plant the charges (or throw grenades) and get the hell out of here.



A DESERT RIDE

Kill the sniper, then lay waste to the Nazis who come running down the road. Once you're in the turret, rotate it forward and kill everything you see. You may need to try a couple of times before you succeed.



RAIDING THE FORTRESS

Move around the left of the jeep, ignoring Snyder, and head up the stairs. From here, you have a clean shot at the gunners who are making things difficult. Take them out, then drop down into the rubble near the tower gunner's position. This'll let you safely flank him and take him out. >>



↑ Wait until the gunner's distracted, then move!



↑ You can't do much until the gunners are dead.

» Ignore the British soldier on the floor above you for now, and plant your charge on the gate as directed. Now go back to the tower and rescue DeHart. Escort him across the stage to the Germans' prison, stopping briefly to fight off Nazi reinforcements and plant a charge on the truck.

WESTERN FRONT FIRST CITY TO FALL

This can get a little chaotic. Stay behind the tanks at all times, only popping out to nail a Panzerschrecker. At one point, the tanks will blow open a building; storm it to find health and kill a rocket sniper.

Go back down to the street and systematically eliminate the infantry. Don't rush in. Your biggest problem is killing Germans with Panzerschrecks before they can destroy your tanks or the M12.

You'll find a second building full of snipers a bit further down the street, with a long tunnel full of Nazis in its basement. Clear it, step by step, and you'll come up behind one of the gun turrets. Use it to wipe out the Nazis on the street below, especially the 'Schreckers to your left, and watch as the M12 blows the theatre open. Go back down to the street, but watch for a trio of 'Schreckers to come popping out from a manhole. For some reason, if they ace the M12 now, you'll still fail the mission.

UNDERGROUND PASSAGE

Set a charge on the ladder, run downstairs to avoid the blast, then head right back up and into the side tunnel. The Germans will probably see you



↑ Why, it's our surprise guests! Hooray!



↑ You're only in danger when you stop.

coming; chase them into the side room, then head up the stairs opposite your entry point and blow up the second ladder.

That side room's going to be a tough nut to crack, as the Nazis inside it have no compunctions about using grenades. Retaliate in kind, knock the two Nazis off their perches, and blow up its ladder.

Now, backtrack to the second ladder. The tunnel next to it leads to the balcony above a particularly difficult stretch of the sewer, where a number of Nazis are being covered by a machine-gun nest. From the balcony, however, you can nail the Nazis from the high ground and you have a relatively clean shot at the gunner. The fourth ladder is behind him.

To progress, use the passage behind the gun nest. Rescue a couple of GIs, heal them if they need it (there are plenty of health packs in this stage), and keep pressing forward. Blow up the final ladder to the surface, then escape the sewers using the nearby tunnel. Take the lead here, as the tunnels are really narrow and it's easy for an NPC to block your shots.

SURRENDER AT AACHEN

Take out the Nazis inside the hotel and use their mounted gun to help repel their ambush. If you go up the ramp nearby, you'll find intact stairs that'll get you back to the street. Protect the tanks and M12 until you find the Panzers.

To flank them, enter the building on the left and fight through it. The back alley's well-guarded,



↑ "I find your performance lacks vigour and depth, Nazis!"



↑ Kill the first tank and the others are easy.

MANSTOPPER ROUNDS

Getting shot briefly halts your forward momentum. This is yet another clever hint to keep your head down, rookie.

DRIVING THE TANK

The Left thumbstick spins the tank; the Right spins the turret. Try to face the way you're moving!

EXITING THE TANK

You can only dismount the tank at certain locations. Hit B to duck inside it, or Y to pop your head out and take shots with your gun.

AIMING HIGH

The 'Schreck's rockets are lobbed, not launched. They will miss at long range unless you aim high.

but it's nothing you haven't seen before now. Open a door behind the final turret, and you'll find an anti-armor unit that's positioned above the Panzers. Take them out and use their Panzerschrecks to eliminate the Germans' tanks.

COME OUT FIGHTING GET A DRINK. THIS'S A LONG ONE.

Head downhill and take out the Panzers. The Sherman tanks' main guns aren't as powerful as the Russians' were, so you'll need a few extra shots. Another tank column will come down the road shortly thereafter, but if you take out the tanks in front, you'll stop the ones in the back from moving.

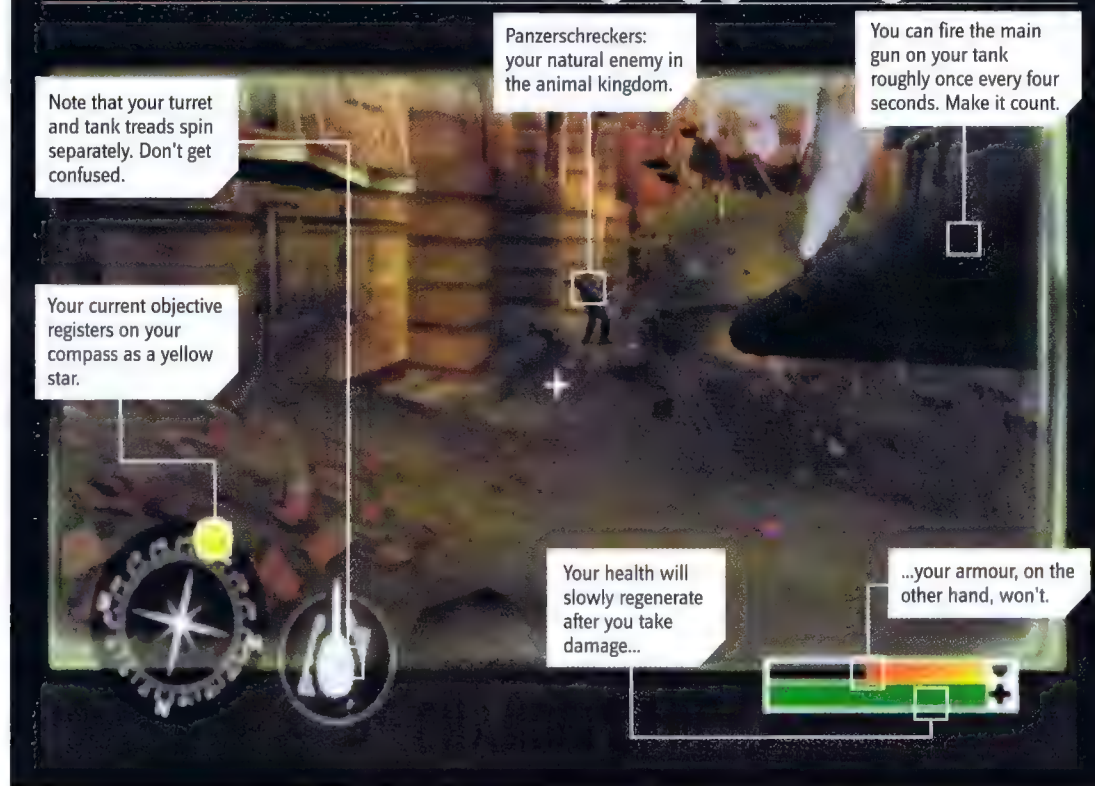
Push past them. Gunners are no problem, but the flak gun may be an issue. Come slowly around the hill and shell it while it's still only half visible, so it doesn't have a clean shot at you.

Continue down the road, concentrating on gunners and flak guns, until you see Tillet proper. You'll wind up fighting a pair of Panzers and a trio of flak guns, so stay far away until the odds have been evened a bit. When it's suggested, park and invade one of the Germans' gun nests; once it's clear, go back into the fight.

The next part of Tillet may be the trickiest. Dismantle the tank defences, then park inside the barn. You'll find a side passage that'll lead you upstairs - make the turn quickly, so the gunner watching the door doesn't cut you in half.

Take out the guards and anti-armor team on the second floor, then grab a Panzerschreck for

TANK THE LORD When the going gets rough...



yourself. A fresh wave of Panzers is rolling into town, and you need to do something about them. Stay away from the holes in the wall and launch rockets at the oncoming tanks, preferably just before or just after they fire. If you need healing, there are three health packs in a side room at the end of the hall.

Return to your tank for a checkpoint. Now all you have to do is storm the third part of Tillet, where another squadron of tanks are waiting for you. Destroy them and a few flak guns, and you're done here.

ROAD TO REMAGEN

Head straight down the street and turn left at the intersection. Dispose of the gunner, then follow that street straight down. You'll get attacked outside an alleyway, and one of your men will make a radio call. Your objective immediately changes to 'secure the bridge'. One of the dead Nazis will drop a G43 rifle. Use it to whittle away at the enemy numbers from a distance, especially once you start getting close to the park. The Bug Zapper trick (see right) works well here.



↑ Try to hit Panzers while they're on the road.

THIS ISN'T AN ACTION MOVIE

Unless you're at point-blank range or you're firing for effect, don't empty clips into people. You'll find one- and two-shot bursts will dramatically improve your accuracy.

COVER EQUALS LIFE

Call of Duty is not a game that rewards run-and-gun. Stay behind hard cover at all times and, if you're caught in the open, go prone.

BUG ZAPPER TRICK

Get a reasonably accurate rifle, such as a G43 or Mosin Nagant, and knock off a gunner. Other Germans in the area will usually rush to take over his turret; kill them as they come. You can wipe out a surprisingly large enemy force by doing this.

The tunnel out of the park is a much-deserved checkpoint. You will be under heavy fire the moment you leave, so let Benny take the heat off you while you dash across the street. Snipe the gunner, go up the stairs, and fight your way to the Rathaus. Once Benny shouts about the Tigers, get indoors with all due speed. You'll find a few Panzerschrecks on the top floor, which you can use to dismantle the tanks.

LAST BRIDGE STANDING

Déjà vu. Stay behind the lead tank and fight off the infantry on the street. When you hit the square, sneak around to the right and take out the Nazis around the machine-gun nest. From their fortifications, kill a few of the Nazis past the barricade, especially anyone who's on the turret, then defuse the last few mines.

When you hit the 'mound', scout ahead via the cemetery. It's worth holding onto your G43 from the last stage, as you can get a lot done by sniping from the top of the cemetery steps. Go around the long way, and your tanks will be waiting for you. Let them take out the machine-gun nest.



↑ This symbol by a mine? Disarm it with Black.



↑ Why you don't charge people with guns...



↑ ...and why you need a rocket launcher.

Your next challenge is leading the tanks through the warehouse district. As usual, your job is to kill Panzerschrecks, as they're the only real threats. When you go indoors, you'll find several snipers on the balcony above you. Nail them with Panzerschreck rounds, just to teach them a lesson.

As you leave the warehouse, don't range ahead. Stay with the tank unit and use them for cover as they roll down the road. Otherwise, the gunners in the buildings ahead of you will tear you apart. Whatever else you do, make sure you have a Panzerschreck and plenty of ammo before you leave this level.

INTO THE HEARTLAND

There's a health pack and a BAR behind you, if you need them. Go prone and crawl for it; there's plenty of cover and the tank will provide backup for as long as you're in its range.

When you get near the end of the bridge, you'll run into some serious fortifications. This is why you have a Panzerschreck; carefully lob rounds into the machine-gun nests until they stop firing, then duck into the tower on your left. Swap out your Panzerschreck for a G43, then head downstairs. The Nazis are guarding a route that'll bring you back up inside the South Tower, onto its roof. From here, pick off the men who are manning the guns on the ground, then grab an anti-aircraft gun and knock down the Stukas. Congratulations! You just won World War II!



↑ It's hard to track the Stukas. Take your time.

Hints & Cheats

This is the only place you need for all the freshest codes and unlockable extras for the latest Xbox titles. You should never be stuck on a game again!

CHEATS IN MOTION

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON 2

Issue 35, Score: 8.0

Enter these codes at the cheats menu:



↑ **Local mode:** B, B, X, A



↑ **Team God mode:** B, B, X, B



↑ **Skip level:** B, B, X, A



↑ **Local mode:** B, B, X, A

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Issue 34, 8.8

Street Tuner magazine cover: 34 wins in stage 5

Power magazine cover: 32 wins in stage 5

Super Street magazine cover: 28 wins in stage 5

Swiss Tuner magazine cover: 25 wins in stage 5

Auto Motor magazine cover: 20 wins in stage 5

GTI magazine cover 1: 16 wins in stage 5

Street Car magazine cover: nine wins in stage 5

Import Tuner magazine cover: four wins in stage 5

Chrome und Flamen magazine cover: 27 wins in stage 4

Stuff magazine cover: 20 wins in stage 4

AutoMaxx magazine cover: 16 wins in stage 4

Spoiler magazine cover: 11 wins in stage 4

Maxi Tuning magazine cover: seven wins in stage 4

Elaborare magazine cover: three wins in stage 4

Hot 4's magazine cover: 18 wins in stage 3

GTI magazine cover 2: 11 wins in stage 3

Car Audio and Electronics magazine cover: six wins in stage 3

Street Car magazine cover: two wins in stage 3

Sports Compact Car magazine cover: eight wins in stage 2



↑ **The Urbz:** find the cheat gnome to earn Socials.

Turbo magazine cover: four wins in stage 2

THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY

Issue 35, 8.0

To use these cheats, you must first activate the cheat gnome: Left, Y, Down, A, X (during play).

Then go up to the gnome in Central Station and enter the following codes. Enter these directions using the Left thumbstick:

Unlock all Socials: Black, Up, Y, Down (D-pad), R

Acquire Skill: L, Black, Right, X, Left

Max Physical: L, R, A, Down, Black

Max Mental: L, B, A, Black, Down

Max Artistic: Y, Down, Black, A, B

Power Social: Down, Black, Right, X, Left



FLATOUT

Issue 35, 8.0

Create a new profile with the following names:
GIVEALL: Unlocks everything.
GIVECASH: A lot of cash.



↑ Get your car on the cover of every mag in *Need for Speed Underground 2!*

SHREK 2

Issue 30, 5.8

Enter these codes at the scrapbook screen:

1,000 coins: Left, Up, A, B, Left, Up, A, B, Left, Up, A, B, B, B, B, B, B,**Unlock bonus games:** Left, Up, A, B, Left, Up, A, B, Left, Up, A, B, X, B, X, B, X, B**Full health:** Left, A, B, B, Left, A, B, B, Left, A, B, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up**Level select:** Left, Up, A, B, Left, Up, A, B, Left, Up, A, B, Up, Up, Up, Up, Up**ROBOTECH INVASION**

Issue 36, 6.0

Enter the following codes at the extras menu:

Unlock Scott Bernard's Cyclone (multiplayer): LTNTCMDR**Unlock Rook Bartley's Cyclone (multiplayer):** BLUEANGLS**Unlock Lancer's Cyclone (multiplayer):** YLLWFLW**Unlock Rand's Cyclone (multiplayer):** KIDGLOVES**Invincibility (single-player only):** SUPERCYC**Unlimited ammo (single-player only):** TRGRHPY**Unlock all levels (single-player only):**

RECLAMATION

One-hit kills (single-player only): DUSTYAYRES**THE DUKES OF HAZZARD: RETURN OF THE GENERAL LEE**

Issue 34, 7.0

Demolition Derby mode: Complete Painting it Orange mission.**Head-to-Head mode:** Complete Volatile Situation mission.

↑ "Donkey, don't you ever fart near me again."

Hot Pursuit mode: Complete Stock Car Race mission.**STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT**

Issue 33, 8.7

Small characters: Enter Jub Jub as your profile name. This cheat is case-sensitive.**THE INCREDIBLES**

Issue 35, 7.0

Enter the following codes at the cheats menu:

Super strength: KRONOS**Refill your Incredimoves meter:** SHOWTIME**Laser eyes:** GAZERBEAM

Classic Cheats

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

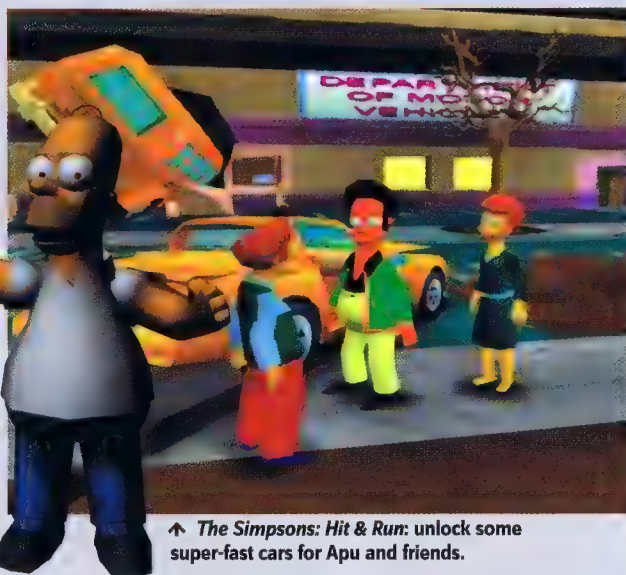
Issue 22, 8.0

To activate the codes menu, go to the options menu and hold both triggers. Now enter the following codes:

Alternate audio during credits: A, X, X, Y**Alternate views:** B, B, B, A**New camera angles:** B, A, B, A**One-hit kills:** Y, Y, X, X**Press your horn for high-flying jumps:** X, X, X, Y**Psychedelic view:** Y, B, Y, B**Secret cars replaced by red box racer:** B, B, Y, X**Show grid view:** B, A, B, Y**Show speedometer:** Y, Y, B, X**Super-fast cars:** X, X, X, X**Unlock all cars:** A, B, A, B**Invincibility:** Y, A, Y, A**JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE**

Issue 11, 7.5

Enter the following codes at the cheats menu:

All gadgets: QLAB↑ *The Simpsons: Hit & Run:* unlock some super-fast cars for Apu and friends.**All multiplayer characters:** PARTY
All multiplayer game modes: GAMEROOM**Alpine Escape level:** POWDER**Baron Samedi (multiplayer):**

VOODOO

Bond spacesuit: ZERO G**Bond tuxedo:** BLACKTIE**Camera upgrade:** SHUTTER**Chain Reaction level:** MELTDOWN**Christmas Jones (multiplayer):**

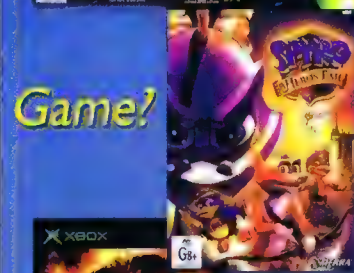
NUCLEAR

Countdown level: BLASTOFF**Decryptor upgrade:** SESAME**Deep Descent level:** AQUA**Demolition mode (multiplayer):**

TNT

Double Cross level: BONSAI

GAMES WAREHOUSE



- ✓ Order Online
- ✓ Secure Server
- ✓ Huge Range!
- ✓ Games Delivered
- ✓ Accessories too!

Credit Card not required!



www.gameswarehouse.com.au

WWW.GAMESWAREHOUSE.COM.AU

10-minute Masterclass

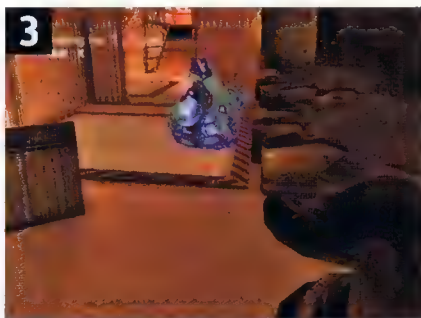
Get shaken, stirred and maimed with GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

NO BOND FILM is complete without a cheesy death scene where a henchman gets horribly killed. Remember the one in *Tomorrow Never Dies* where a bad guy falls into a printing press? Bond says, "They will print anything these days!" *Rogue Agent's* death traps are the subject of this month's masterclass.

The traps are dotted around each mission and are the best thing about *Rogue Agent's* multiplayer mode. Many are activated using special control panels, but some require you to take a hostage instead. Here's a list of the nastiest traps; all you have to do is think of a cheesy line to go with them!



2 The Uplink multiplayer map features a mean circling chopper that fires indiscriminately at everyone. You can either try to avoid it or destroy it with heavy machine-gun fire. You won't be happy if it steals one of your kills at the last moment.



3 Killing an enemy using the spinning gears in Uplink is more difficult. Stun them with a melee attack and take them hostage using A. You can now drag the hostage around and either push them into the gears or throw them in using Black.



5 Scaramanga has a replica of Al Capone in his funhouse. Run to the control panel at the rear of the room to activate Capone's Tommy Gun. Not even a human shield can save you if you're in the firing line. Another panel is on the upper walkway.



6 The cowboy outside the funhouse saloon works in pretty much the same way. There's one control panel at the bottom of the wooden stairs and another on the upper balcony. Sadly you can't destroy any of these models however hard you try.



8 High G-forces are bad for the human body. What's worse is being hit by a centrifuge at top speed. In the Moonraker Launch level, start the centrifuge by finding the control panel to the rear of the room. Anyone in its path will be killed instantly.



9 The mission control centre in the Moonraker Launch level is a bad place to hide. Don't even go in there unless you're chasing someone down. Activate the control panel at the front of the room to overload all the control panels and kill everyone.



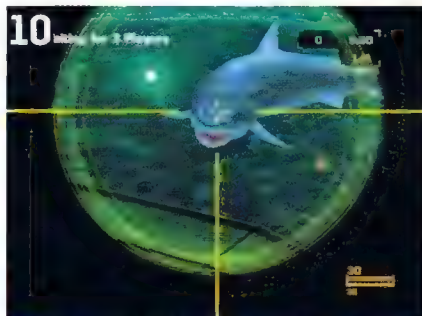
1 On the upper walkway in the Golden Gate Bridge level, activate the control pad and anyone on the lower walkway will be cut to pieces by the blimp's machine-gun. The fire will also destroy the lampposts on the south side of the bridge, causing lethal explosions.



4 Two ways to activate the quicksand pit on the Pyramid Duel map: if you're on the ground, move to any of the three entrances below the metal walkway. The ground turns mushy and the walkway collapses. There's also a button on the walkway.



7 Being caught in the Moonraker Duel blast pit is bad. Wait until an enemy collects a harpoon rocket launcher within, or wait until a few enemies are fighting down there. Find the panel on the top level to the rear of the pit and they'll all be toast.



10 The most fun thing in *Rogue Agent* is feeding your enemies to the Great White in Atlantis. Take a hostage and throw him into the water to be devoured by the greatest predator ever. Unlike the films though, there's a disappointing lack of blood.



ON SALE NOW!



NEXT MONTH

in **OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE**
ENOUGH PREVIEWS! IT'S TIME TO DELIVER THE MAN!

SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

It's time to dive once more into the world of government-sanctioned murder.

ALSO IN THE ISSUE

Mercenaries - GTA in the Korean divide
DOA Ultimate, more than just a chick-fight
Pull out the ol' footy boots for Rugby 2005!

PLUS!

ON THE DEMO DVD:

FORZA MOTORSPORTS
OUTLAW GOLF 2
WORMS: FORTS
UNDER SIEGE
MECHASSAULT 2
...AND LOADS MORE!

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE ISSUE 38

ON SALE FEBRUARY 23!

TURN TO PAGE 050 TO SECURE YOUR COPY NOW!

All magazine and disc contents are subject to change.



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2005 ISSUE 37

EMAIL staff@oxm.com.au

TELEPHONE (02) 9386 4666

FAX (02) 9386 4288

STAFF

EDITOR **KEVIN CHEUNG**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **GAVIN OGDEN**
SUB-EDITOR **JAMES COTTEE**
TECH EDITOR **MATT WOLFS**
STAFF WRITER **ANDY IRVING**
FORUM MODERATOR **ERIKA DICKINSON**
PRODUCTION EDITOR **VANESSA HARDS**
PRODUCER **BEN TALBOT**
ART DIRECTOR **PAUL COOK**

CONTRIBUTORS

WORDS **DAN TOOSE, JAMES LEDLEY, ELIOT FISH, CAMERON DAVIS, RALPH PANEBIANCO, RACHEL LONGBOW, STEPHEN FARRELLY, ASHER MOSES**
SPECIAL THANKS TO **CHINA LILLY LEE, JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE, THE T3 CREW & INVADER ZIM**

ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING MANAGER **SAM ROCHAIX**
CALL NOW TO ADVERTISE: (02) 9386 4666
EMAIL: sam@derwenthoward.com.au

MANAGEMENT

DIRECTORS **JIM FLYNN, NATHAN BERKLEY**
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR **NICK CUTLER**
FINANCIAL DIRECTOR **GARY PEROY**
FINANCIAL CONTROLLER **WAYNE BOX**
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT **JACLYN DOWDELL**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **SUE WALL**
CIRCULATION MANAGER **KAREN DAY**
CREATIVE DIRECTOR **SIMON WAN**
STRATEGIC COUNSEL **SCOTT MARINCHEK**

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES

SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE **1800 007 820**
ONLINE: WWW.DERWENTHOWARD.COM.AU/SUBS
ALSO SEE PAGE 050 FOR DETAILS

DISC PRODUCTION

CSL LIMITED
COPYRIGHT CO-ORDINATOR: **SARAH WILLIAMS**

DISTRIBUTION BY **GORDON & GOTCH**
PRINTED IN AUSTRALIA BY **WEBSTAR**

All contents © Copyright Derwent Howard Pty Ltd 2005
Derwent Howard Pty Ltd
PO Box 1037
Bondi Junction NSW Australia 1355
Tel (02) 9386 4666
Fax (02) 9386 4288

'Xbox' and the Xbox logo are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. The Official Xbox magazine is published under license from Microsoft. The Official Xbox Magazine is an independent publication not affiliated with Microsoft Corporation.

The Official Australian Xbox Magazine is written and printed by OXM (Australia) under licence from Microsoft Corp.

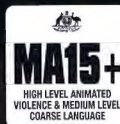
Articles in this issue reproduced from the Official UK Xbox Magazine are copyright or licensed by Future Publishing, a Future Network plc group company, UK 2005. All rights reserved.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

This issue of Official Australian Xbox Magazine published by Derwent Howard Pty Ltd may contain offers, competitions or surveys which require you to provide information about yourself if you choose to enter them or take part in them (Reader Offer). If you provide information about yourself to Derwent Howard, Derwent Howard will use this information to provide you with products or services you have requested, and may supply your information to contractors to enable Derwent Howard to do this. Derwent Howard will also use your information to inform you of other Derwent Howard publications, products, services and events. Derwent Howard may also give your information to organizations that are providing special prizes or offers and are clearly associated with the Reader Offer. Unless you tell us not to, Derwent Howard may give your information to other organizations that may use it to inform you of other products, services or events or give to other organizations that may use it for this purpose. If you would like to gain access to the information Derwent Howard holds about you please contact Derwent Howard's Privacy Officer at Derwent Howard Pty Ltd, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, 1355.

OUR MONTHLY SALES FIGURE
IS **23,072** JANUARY-JUNE 2004

Actual in game interrogation



**WHAT'S IT FEEL LIKE
TO DRILL THE HEAD OF THE PUNK
WHO STOLE YOUR FAMILY FROM YOU?**

Preorder at
EB GAMES
electronics boutique®
and receive
**The Punisher
T-Shirt***

(* while stocks last - conditions apply.)



BECOME  **THE PUNISHER™**

AVAILABLE NOW

PlayStation 2

XBOX

MARVEL



THQ

© 2004 THQ Inc. MARVEL, The Punisher and the distinctive likeness(es) thereof are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. and are used with permission. Copyright © 2004 Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. www.marvel.com. The Punisher is produced under license from Marvel Characters, Inc. Volition, Inc.®, THQ and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. Microsoft, Xbox, and the Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. "X" and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



The BARD'S TALE™

Coming Soon

"...Right Now, There Is No Other Game In The Genre That Looks Remotely As Good."

- PSM

"...It Has Skyrocketed To The Top Of My Most-Wanted Games List."

- Gamespy

"Turning RPG Clichés On Their Head."

- Electronic Gaming Monthly

"...Intelligent Scriptwriting And A Well-Developed Sense Of Humor."

- GamePro



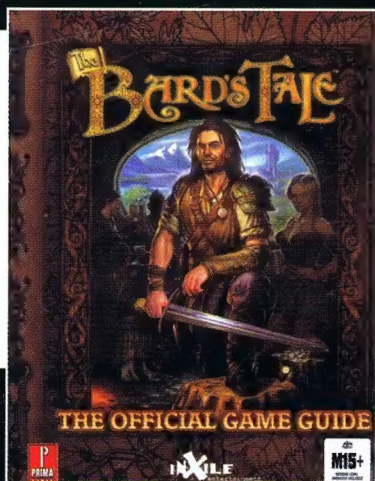
Summon Eccentric Characters To Do Your Dirty Work. Like This Poor Old Bastard Who Finds Traps...the Hard Way.



Less A, More I - Don't Underestimate Your Crafty Opponents



Advanced Attitude System - Your Snarky or Nice decisions change the course of the game for true replayability.



Preorder at
EB GAMES™
electronics boutique®
and receive
**The Bards Tale
Prima Guide***

(* while stocks last - conditions apply.)

INXILE
entertainment™



PlayStation 2



© 2004 inXile entertainment. All rights reserved. The Bard's Tale is a trademark or registered trademark of inXile entertainment in certain countries; and is a trademark or registered trademark of Electronic Arts Inc. in certain other countries where it is used under license. inXile entertainment and the inXile logo are trademarks of inXile entertainment. THQ and the THQ logo are registered trademarks of THQ, Inc. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, and the Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.